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★★★★★ EVENING STANDARD

EUROPE

2020

04—05

04

26 LONDON  
27 BIRMINGHAM  
29 LEEDS  
30 MANCHESTER  
05 01 GLASGOW  
03 DUBLIN

UK  
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UK  
UK  
IRELAND

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ARENA BIRMINGHAM  
FIRST DIRECT ARENA  
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3ARENA





THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSIC MAGAZINE



The Maverick Soul Of  
**Michael  
Kiwanuka**

**The Holy Bible**  
The inside story of  
Manic Street Preachers' classic

**Slowthai**  
Gets mashed in Los Angeles

**Sam Fender:**  
Greggs for life!

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

The Resurrection of

# The Streets

Two new albums. One feature film. How Mike Skinner stepped from darkness back into the light.

Kim Gordon **Edwyn Collins** Foals **Kate Tempest** King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard





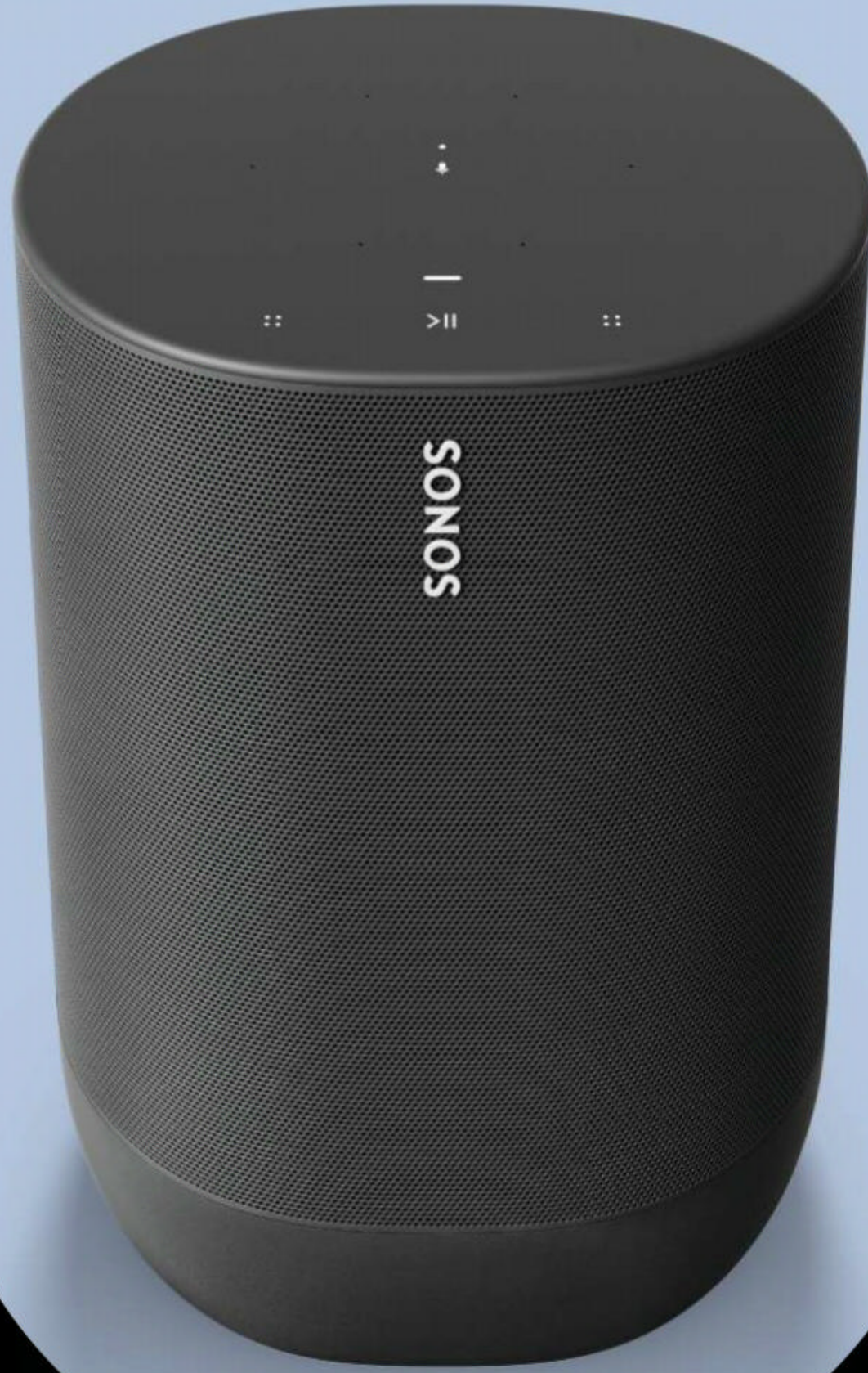
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your music

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Domino

(SANDY) ALEX G



# House of Sugar

OUT NOW

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November 2019

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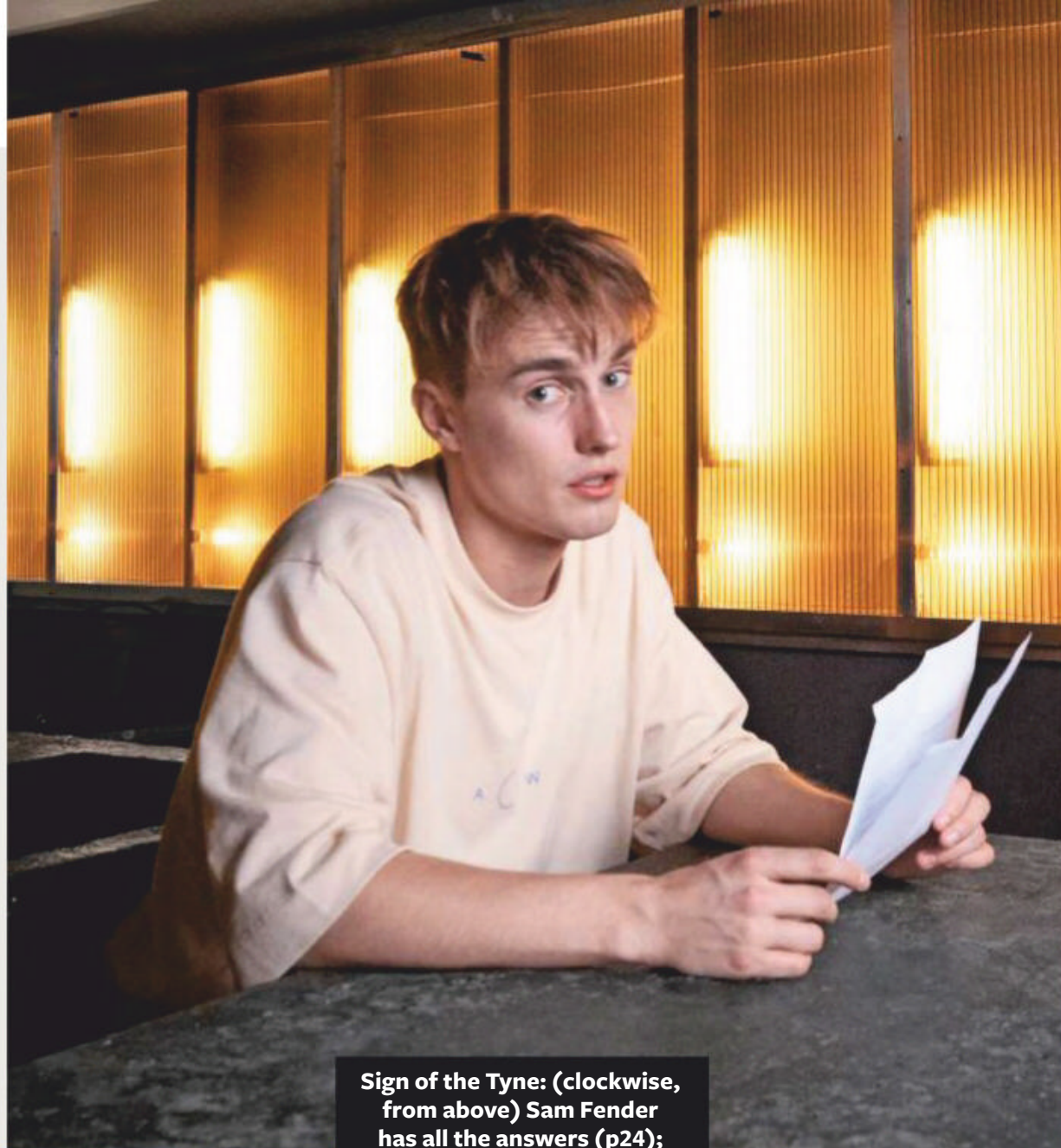
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- 21 MAR NEWCASTLE UTILITA ARENA**
- 23 MAR GLASGOW THE SSE HYDRO**
- 25 MAR LEEDS FIRST DIRECT ARENA**
- 30 MAR CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA**
- 01 APR BIRMINGHAM RESORTS WORLD ARENA**
- 03 APR NOTTINGHAM MOTORPOINT ARENA**
- 06 APR LIVERPOOL M&S BANK ARENA**
- 08 APR LONDON THE SSE ARENA, WEMBLEY**

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# Backstage...

We're asking a lot of you this month. We already want you to vote for your final Q awards nominations. We also would love you to consider splashing out 20 quid for the Q Awards nominees show on 16 October at the Roundhouse, in London, to see Pale Waves, supported by Easy Life, and a very special guest, this year's Maverick Award-winner, Edwyn Collins. (That's more of a gift than a request, really – I'm cutting my own throat here darling, I can't give you quality like that any cheaper!)

One more thing, though. As we roll down time's precipice towards the end of the decade, please also



find a moment in the next few days to mull over the song which to your mind has most defined the period between January 2010 and the close of 2019. In other words, what's the best song of the last 10 years? And can you tell us why the song deserves inclusion in no more than 150 words, too, please?

Send your suggestions to Q Mail by no later than 4 October and we'll print the best suggestions in next month's edition. In the meantime, please do enjoy the issue. We put it all in for you, as ever.

Ted Kessler, Editor, Q Magazine.

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[...And their favourite street...]

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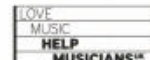
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29 MANCHESTER ARENA  
30 BIRMINGHAM RESORTS WORLD ARENA

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02 BOURNEMOUTH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE  
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TOUR 2020

MARCH

31 LIVERPOOL EVENTIM OLYMPIA

APRIL

03 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO

04 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO

06 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

07 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

08 HULL BONUS ARENA

10 EDINBURGH USHER HALL

11 EDINBURGH USHER HALL

13 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

14 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY

16 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY

17 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY

18 CARDIFF MOTORPOINT ARENA

20 PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS

21 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

23 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

24 BRIGHTON CENTRE

25 BOURNEMOUTH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

27 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO

28 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO

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# EDITORS

GREATEST HITS

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SAT 29 / O2 APOLLO MANCHESTER

MARCH

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# INCOMING

## NEW ADVENTURES IN MUSIC...

In which we call up  
Sleater-Kinney's **Carrie  
Brownstein**, are dazzled by  
**Sampa The Great** and take  
it away with **Lucy Rose**.

### First Look

## Q AWARDS SHOW ANNOUNCED!

Pale Waves, Edwyn Collins and Easy Life will play  
a special gig at London's Roundhouse in October.

**D**etails of a special show at  
the Q Awards 2019 were  
announced earlier this month.  
Taking place on Wednesday,  
16 October at Camden's  
Roundhouse, the ceremony will be followed  
by sets from two Q Best Breakthrough Act  
nominees, Manchester indie-rock quartet  
Pale Waves and Leicester electro-pop outfit  
Easy Life, plus a special guest performance  
from legendary Scottish singer-songwriter  
Edwyn Collins, who will receive the Q  
Maverick accolade at this year's awards.  
Tickets for the event start at £20 and are  
available now from [www.roundhouse.org.uk](http://www.roundhouse.org.uk).

Collins's appearance will come on  
the back of the tour to support his  
new album *Badbea* and he says the  
audience should expect a blend of  
old and new, with some curiosities  
thrown in. "Our live show is 40 years of  
rock'n'roll!" he says. "People like to hear  
their favourites, Rip It Up and Falling And  
Laughing, but we've been trying to think  
about new old ones to play too. It gets tricky  
trying to put the setlist together with so  
much material to choose from. We can't  
have a 45-song setlist!"

Pale Waves have spent much of the  
12 months since the release of their debut  
album, *My Mind Makes Noises*, on the road,  
amassing a diehard fanbase around the globe.  
"When people come to our shows, they get  
a really exciting, honest band performance  
with Northern spirit," says frontwoman  
Heather Baron-Gracie. The show will be the  
last of their campaign to support *My Mind  
Makes Noises*, with the band currently  
writing its follow-up and preparing to go into  
the studio. "Over the past year and a half >>

**The main man:  
Edwyn Collins  
brings "40 years  
of rock'n'roll".**



MICHAEL CLEMENT, GETTY

**"We nail it": Easy  
Life, featuring Murray  
Matravers (centre).**







**“When people come to our shows, they get a really exciting performance, with Northern spirit.”**  
**Heather Baron-Gracie**

Neo-gothic art: Pale Waves’ Heather Baron-Gracie stars at this year’s Q Awards.






Join the Q: you could be in with a chance of winning tickets to this year's awards.

we've played so many shows, we've changed completely. As performers we've come a long way and believe in ourselves a lot more. Not that we didn't before, but everything has changed now."

Completing the bill are Leicester quintet Easy Life. The band's recorded output genre-hops from sleek R&B to jazz-tinged pop but singer Murray Matravers explains that they are a different proposition live. "We never try to replicate the production," he says. "Live, I want a vibe, I want to see people enjoying playing it. I think we nail it."

The shortlist for this year's Q Awards was unveiled earlier this month, with The 1975, Billie Eilish, Stormzy, Lewis Capaldi and Florence + The Machine leading the nominations. You can have your say on the winners by casting your vote at [Qthemusic.com](http://Qthemusic.com). Voting will also put you in with a chance of being there on the day.

This year's Q Awards will be presented by singer-songwriter Nadine Shah. Talking about her first hosting gig, Shah said, "I think a lot of my job is going to be telling people what side of the stage they need to walk off: 'Oh no, this way, love.' I'm going to be like this oddball Geordie lollipop lady." This year's awards will be preceded by a special, sold-out show from Biffy Clyro at the Roundhouse the night before, on Tuesday 15 October. 

## The nominations for the Q Awards 2019 are:

### Q Best Breakthrough Act presented by Red Stripe

Gerry Cinnamon  
Little Simz  
Rosalía  
Lewis Capaldi  
slowthai  
Fontaines D.C.  
AJ Tracey  
Easy Life  
Pale Waves  
Sam Fender  
Working Men's Club  
Self Esteem

### Q Best Track

People – The 1975  
Vossi Bop – Stormzy  
Bad Guy – Billie Eilish  
Must I Evolve? – JARV IS...  
Juice – Lizzo  
Cellophane – FKA twigs  
Incapable – Róisín Murphy  
Ladbroke Grove – AJ Tracey  
Harmony Hall – Vampire Weekend  
Someone You Loved – Lewis Capaldi

### Q Best Album

Eton Alive – Sleaford Mods  
When We All Fall Asleep,

### Where Do We Go? –

Billie Eilish  
A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships – The 1975  
Norman Fucking Rockwell – Lana Del Rey  
Remind Me Tomorrow – Sharon Van Etten  
Nothing Great About Britain – slowthai  
Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost (Part 1) – Foals  
Psychodrama – Dave  
GREY Area – Little Simz  
Serfs Up! – Fat White Family

### Q Best Live Performance presented by The Cavern Club

The 1975 – Reading Festival  
Stormzy – Glastonbury  
Ariana Grande – O2 Arena  
The Courteeners – Heaton Park  
The Streets – Brixton O2 Academy  
Florence + The Machine – BST Hyde Park  
Doves – TCT at Royal Albert Hall  
The Strokes – All Points East  
Michael Kiwanuka – End Of The Road  
Neil Young & Bob Dylan – BST Hyde Park

### Q Best Solo Artist

Lewis Capaldi  
Stormzy  
Loyle Carner  
Billie Eilish  
Dave  
Aldous Harding  
Liam Gallagher  
Florence + The Machine  
Kate Tempest  
Kano

### Q Best Act In The World Today presented by Rocksteady Music School

Stormzy  
The 1975  
Billie Eilish  
Florence + The Machine  
Liam Gallagher  
Arctic Monkeys  
Lana Del Rey  
Bruce Springsteen  
Christine And The Queens  
Biffy Clyro

### Q Best Festival/Event

All Points East  
Glastonbury  
Latitude  
Isle Of Wight Festival  
British Summer Time  
Reading and Leeds Festival

## How To Vote

To vote, visit [Qthemusic.com](http://Qthemusic.com) and vote for your favourite artist, track, album or festival/event from the nominations shown here. In addition to these categories, there will also be awards bestowed by Q magazine on the night to recognise career-long achievements. The closing date for shortlist voting is 7 October – your chance to help determine the winners.

## Win Tickets

A pair of VIP Balcony tickets to the Q Awards 2019 are up for grabs. Everyone who votes online will have the chance to enter a prize draw to win a pair of tickets to the Q Awards.

*Terms & Conditions:* Travel, accommodation and other costs are not included. The winner of a pair of VIP Balcony tickets to the Q Awards 2019 will be notified within a week of voting on the shortlist ending on 7 October. Entrants must be 18 or over. Visit [www.Bauermedia.co.uk/terms-and-conditions](http://www.Bauermedia.co.uk/terms-and-conditions) for Ts & Cs.

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"A thoughtful pose, you say? Allow me to oblige": Carrie Brownstein ponders in Portland.



## Where Are You Right Now?

# CARRIE BROWNSTEIN

The Sleater-Kinney vocalist and guitarist gives us the lowdown on the teenage Duran Duran covers band she fronted.

● **Hi, Carrie. Where are you right now?**

I am in my office in my home in Portland, Oregon. You caught me in the morning and I have some things to do, so I thought I should be in my office.

**Your dog features quite heavily on your Instagram page. Who's going to look after the dog when Sleater-Kinney go on tour?**

That's funny because she is staring at me right now asking me the same question. I do have a really wonderful dog-sitter but this time the plan is to bring the dog with me on tour, or at least part of the tour. Her name is Cricket. She's not a little dog. Some artists take those little pocket dogs on tour and that makes sense, you can put them in a bag, but with bigger dogs I'm less sure.

**She definitely doesn't look like she'd fit in a bag.**

She does not fit in a bag. Well, I haven't tried. I could get a really giant duffle bag with a hole in the top for her head.

**How old is Cricket?**

She's 10 actually, so she's getting on in years.

**Is that like 40 in dog years?**

I think it's like 70. She's a senior citizen basically, so I have to take her on tour. It's like a retirement for her.

**You should get her a cruise.**

Yeah, we should just play cruises. She can sit out on the deck.

**When you were pitching Portlandia to TV studios you must have had to come up with a few "one-line pitches". What would your one-line pitch be for the new Sleater-Kinney album?**

Um, I would say – "The Center Won't Hold is a rumination on anger and despair that seeks connection as a form of hope."

**That's pretty good.**

Yeah, I can come to your offices and work on the headlines.

**It sounds quite '80s synth-pop in places, were you into that sort of thing growing up?**

I wish you could see a photo of my childhood bedroom wall which was covered in pictures of Duran Duran. I was really obsessed.

**Were you a full-on Durannie?**

I was a little too young, really. I was a big enough fan that one summer I formed a Duran Duran covers band called Lil B Duran Duran. I self-elected as Simon Le Bon.

We didn't actually play, we fashioned instruments out of wood in our parents' garages, painted them and just stood around and lip-synced. To call it a covers band... it was more of a lip-sync band.

**Do the Sleater-Kinney fanbase have a group name like Durannies? What's the collective noun for your fans?**

I don't think so. I think people really have their own relationship to our music and want to feel connected but individually. I don't think they'd label themselves anything. If you can think of a name, then great. I think if we came up with a name they'd be like, "Nah, fuck off!"

**What about The Kinney Club?**

OK, you propose that to our fans and see what happens.

**What is your profession on your passport?**

Writer. I write television scripts, I'm working on a screenplay, I wrote a memoir, I write songs. It's probably the least exciting to say out of all of those but that feels truest.

**When Sleater-Kinney went on hiatus in 2003 you worked as a music journalist for a bit too. Does that mean you can now recognise some of the tools of the trade when you're being interviewed?**

I didn't do a lot of interviews, I mostly wrote critiques, but the thing I'm wary of when I'm being interviewed is being baited. You know where you can tell there is a contentious argument already embedded in the writer's mind. They have their thesis and the thing they're looking for is to confirm their thesis then you have to spend the whole interview working against their bias. That's exhausting.

**Do you feel baited being asked about your dog and Duran Duran?**

Very baited, but I was happy to take the bait.

**If you had a superpower, what would it be?**

I think to be able to breathe underwater would be amazing. Being able to navigate another world seems very mysterious. That's what Aquaman does, so I'll be his sidekick.

**Where will you be in 20 minutes' time?**

We've come full circle. I will now be taking Cricket on a walk. We will get down to a park and I will throw the frisbee for her and she will miraculously catch it, impressing

passers-by.

**Sounds like an excellent way to spend a morning, thanks for talking to us.**

It was a pleasure, thank you.

CHRIS CATCHPOLE

**"I self-elected as Simon Le Bon. It was more of a lip-sync band."**



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Breaking

# SAMPA THE GREAT

In a search to express her own identity, the Zambia-born rapper has created a new, kaleidoscopic strand of hip-hop.



It was in the aftermath of her two acclaimed mixtapes – 2015's The

Great Mixtape and 2017's Australian Music Prize-winning *Birds And The BEE9* – that Sampa Tembo, otherwise known as Sampa The Great, started to feel uneasy. Born in Zambia and raised in Botswana's capital Gaborone, the singer and rapper moved to Sydney in 2014 to study sound engineering. As her musical reputation grew, leading to support slots with Kendrick Lamar, Lauryn Hill and Thundercat, she noticed something disturbing: "Being based in Australia and being called Australian, I felt like my identity was being erased or just... put under the rug. I really felt like I had to tell the story for myself first before I get frustrated with people creating the narrative. Plus," she laughs, "my friends at home were like, 'Whaaat! We were raised with her, what's going on? She's getting bougie!'"

With the exhilarating musical code-switching of her first album, *The Return*, Sampa The Great fearlessly seizes control, fiercely interrogating ideas of home and belonging. Over 19 fluidly dynamic songs, she takes a dizzying 360-degree spin around her heritage, from Zambian folk to gospel music, vintage soul to modern hip-hop. Opening song,

**Get This Track:**  
**Final Form**  
**For Fans Of:**  
**Mos Def,**  
**Little Simz,**  
**Thundercat**



BARUN CHATTERJEE



Mwana ("Child") features her mother and sister singing in Bemba. "It was important to have a song in my language," explains Tembo. "When it comes to hip-hop, we associate it with American culture, specifically,

African-American culture. But I can still add my essence to hip-hop." She played her first ever shows in Africa this year, performing in Zambia, Swaziland and South Africa, but not Botswana – her parents haven't yet seen her perform live. "They saw me in church choir, they've seen me onstage – but not as Sampa The Great."

Will it be emotional when they do?"

"It'll also be super-hectic because I'll have to take out every curse word!"

One of The Return's defining tracks is the widescreen glory of Final Form, a blazing combination of Pan-African politics ("Third world win it/First world outdated... all my heroes assassinated") and personal revolution. It was recorded in a rural Welsh studio, where a sleep-deprived Tembo stayed up with the album's "executive producer" Silentjay. "I was exhausted, we were watching Jay-Z and Timbaland, super-inspired, and I was like, 'I'm about to introduce you to the whole story of this album!' It sounds like it's preparing you for something, the long intro, the strings. Something is about to happen!" It's a statement that works equally well for her career right now. "I'm ready for everything," she says.

With a record as excellent as The Return behind her, there's no doubt about that. *VICTORIA SEGAL*

"I'm ready for everything": Sampa The Great has come fully prepared for success.



## THE TUNES ON REPEAT IN THE Q OFFICE THIS MONTH.

### LANA DEL REY NORMAN F\*\*\*\*\*G ROCKWELL

A stirring piano ballad anchored by Del Rey's wry nonchalance, this title track beautifully sets up the definitive album from an artist at her peak.

**Out:** now, on Polydor.

### STORMZY SOUNDS OF THE SKENG

Stormzy's new single suggests his next record will shape-shift in much the same way his debut did. It follows up the soulful Crown with a frenetic three-and-a-half minutes that's centred around the rapper's urgent delivery.

**Out:** now, on Hashtag Merky Music.

### THE 1975 PEOPLE

Matty Healy has consistently talked up The 1975's love of emo and hardcore bands... but who saw this coming? People combines their knack for sloganeering and melodic hooks with fuzzy riffs and screamed vocals.

**Out:** now, on Dirty Hit.

### MASSIVE ATTACK VS. MAD PROFESSOR METAL BANSHEE

Pummelling, echo-laden dub deconstruction of Siouxsie And The Banshees' 1978 track Metal Postcard, as found on UK producer Mad



Lana Del Rey:  
f\*\*\*\*\*g good.

Professor's reworked version of the Bristol trip-hoppers' darkest album, Mezzanine. Available now on pink vinyl, no less.

**Out:** now, on UMC/Virgin EMI.

### FKA TWIGS HOLY TERRAINE (FEAT. FUTURE)

It's been over five years since LP1 introduced FKA Twigs's visionary twist on R&B. This new single suggests her second LP will be just as forward-thinking. A collaboration with US rapper Future, it layers warped beats, cavernous synths and piercing vocal melodies.

**Out:** now, on Young Turks.

### BROCKHAMPTON NO HALO

The opening track to Brockhampton's new LP is the Texan rap crew at their most sombre, a low-key acoustic track hinting that the worldwide success of last year's Iridescence may have caught up with them.

**Out:** now, on Question Everything.

### CELESTE STRANGE

The minimalist soul of Strange casts its spell after repeated listens, the



emotive vocals of Brighton singer Celeste wonderfully at odds with the floaty, airy instrumentation.

**Out:** now, on Both Sides Records.

### FOALS THE RUNNER

This standout from their new "Part 2" LP finds the quartet at their tightly-wound best, a lithe groove and crunching riff lighting a fuse beneath Yannis Philippakis's yearning vocal.

**Out:** now, on Warners.

### MICHAEL KIWANUKA YOU AIN'T THE PROBLEM

With its jazzy, David Axelrod-style arrangement and Gil Scott-Heron-channelling delivery, the opening track from the North London soulman's third album is one of his most exhilarating, uplifting moments yet.

**Out:** now, on Polydor.

### ANGEL OLSEN ALL MIRRORS

The title track from Olsen's upcoming fourth LP is a fitting microcosm of the record's mix of emotional turmoil and detachment. Chilly synthesizers and booming electronic drums provide a stark landscape for the St Louis singer's anguished vocals.

**Out:** now, on Jagjaguwar.



## In The Studio

## BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB GET BACK IN THE SADDLE

London indie-rock quartet bring half-decade hiatus to an end and get to work on album number five.

**B**etween the ages of 19 and 26, the four members of Bombay Bicycle Club did very little really, apart from being members of Bombay Bicycle Club. They grew up together living in one another's pockets, made four albums and toured almost constantly. By 2014, they were utterly burned out and announced an indefinite "hiatus" for the band.

"The word hiatus is so annoying," says frontman Jack Steadman. "We didn't want to say, 'We're breaking up', and we didn't want to say nothing. So, we had to say something."

"Hiatus said it best," reckons bassist Ed Nash. "That could've continued forever or six months. And it ended up lasting four years."

It took calls from the band's management reminding them that the 10th anniversary of their debut album, *I Had The Blues But I Shook Them Loose*, was looming in 2019

to encourage the North London quartet to regroup. This November they'll play a series of shows performing that record in full. But, for Steadman, it didn't seem enough.

"You realise that you're only 29," he says, "and the idea of playing a comeback reunion anniversary show is something that, like, 60-year-olds do. We made a decision that if we were going to come back, we couldn't just do a couple of gigs looking backwards. We had to do something looking forwards."

In the intervening years, Steadman had launched his funk/soul project Mr Jukes, Nash made a solo album under the name Toothless, drummer Suren de Saram played with Jessie Ware and Billie Marten, and guitarist Jamie MacColl quit music altogether to study political science, but is now back with band.

"He wanted to get back into touring because it's the easiest way of going around the world," jokes Nash.

From October 2018 to July of this year, for one week every month Steadman and Nash went on songwriting trips to a friend's bungalow in the Cornish village of Portwrinkle. Aptly named, as it turned out. "It's pretty much like a retirement village," says Steadman. "Very beautiful. Nice view of the ocean. It proved incredibly fruitful for writing music."

The pair settled into a routine – Steadman upstairs with a laptop recording set-up, Nash downstairs with another. They'd work all day, cook together and then watch TV in the evening. Once they'd collected enough songs, they decided it was time to head back to London and a proper studio.

Roping in US producer John Congleton (Wild Beasts, Angel Olsen), they asked him where he wanted to record and, being a huge Anglophile, he chose The Kinks' Konk Studios in Crouch End. It was a perfect fit: Bombay Bicycle Club live around there and had been working in that studio on and off for years.

"Ray Davies came in one day," Nash smiles, "and John, who's very cool normally, you could see he freaked the fuck out."

Congleton loosened up Bombay Bicycle Club, forcing them to work faster and not worry about mistakes in the performances. From the sessions at Konk, four finished tracks emerged – recent single *Eat, Sleep, Wake (Nothing But You)*, *Do You Feel Loved*, a co-write between Nash and Liz Lawrence with the working title of *People People* (featuring Lawrence and Steadman singing together) and the genre-blurring *I Worry About You*, which mixes a UK garage-ish beat with My Bloody Valentine-styled guitars.

"We're trying to create a new genre there," quips Steadman. "Shoegaze garage."

Their fifth album only partly recorded, the plan now is for the band and Congleton to bunker themselves in the producer's Los Angeles studio in September to get it nailed. "We've found a little Airbnb in Silverlake," says Steadman, "and I think it's going to be fun for us to get out of Crouch End and have a little bit of a romantic experience somewhere and get caught up in it all."

Meanwhile, the band are getting ready to revisit *I Had The Blues...*, which for Steadman involves the possibly cringey task of revisiting his 19-year-old self.

"Imagine finding your old diary under your bed and reading it and being like, 'Oh God, you're a bit angsty, aren't you?'" he laughs. "But it's nice, cos I think for a lot of people in the audience, that will have been their shared experience. So, the embarrassment isn't only mine. You can share it with a whole crowd of people."

There might even be a new song or three in the encores. Ten years in, the next decade of Bombay Bicycle Club is shaping up nicely. *TOM DOYLE*

West Country boy: chief Bombay Cyclist, Jack Steadman, on one of his Cornish songwriting sessions.



## WHAT WE KNOW

**Due:** Early 2020

**Title:** TBA

**Song Titles:** *People People* (working title), *I Worry About You*, *Do You Feel Loved*, *Eat, Sleep, Wake (Nothing But You)*

**Fascinating Fact:** During their Cornwall writing camps, Jack Steadman and Ed Nash were inspired by a cookery programme to get into making their own tacos from scratch. They're now experts. "We're thinking about starting a taco shack," the singer reckons.





**“I think it’s going to be fun for us to get out of Crouch End and have a little bit of a romantic experience somewhere.”**

**“Los Angeles, here we come!”: Bombay Bicycle Club (from left, Suren de Saram, Ed Nash and Jamie MacColl), Konk Studios, North London, March, 2019.**





**“This one’s on me!”:  
Lucy Rose bags it up  
for Q at the Afghan  
Kitchen, Islington.**

OUT TO  
LUNCH  
WITH...

# LUCY ROSE

The singer-songwriter breaks her self-imposed meat ban to share plates in North London.

**O**ur bottoms have barely touched the seat at North London’s Afghan Kitchen when Lucy Rose nods to the waitress to request the selection she’s already picked for us to enjoy this afternoon. Rose recently moved to Brighton with her husband and manager, Will, and prior to that this was her favourite local restaurant.

The initial plan was to meet in a fancy gastropub nearby but that didn’t go down well with the singer-songwriter. “I’ve got serious issues with posh pub food,” she says, with the finality of someone who really does have serious issues with posh pub food. “Like pork belly or bangers and mash with onion shavings on top and all that. Real issues with it.”

In a few hours, she’ll be going out for a Thai meal and prior to our lunch date she had a breakfast meeting in Indian small plates chain Dishoom. “What a day for food,” she beams. “It’s quite naughty, I feel this should be off the record because I shouldn’t be eating meat, but I had a bacon naan.”

As a result of all the tours to far-flung corners of the globe she’s embarked on since emerging in 2010, Rose is concerned with the size of her carbon footprint. The idea is to rebalance her environmental karma by cutting

out meat. She’s not quite there yet, but has an ingenious method/get-out clause to do her bit. “I always go for really obscure meats that lots of people don’t like. Is that better?” she enquires. “Like octopus, there’s fewer people eating that, they don’t have octopus in McDonald’s. Maybe I could just eat goat. Or pigeons.”

## “I’ve got serious issues with posh pub food.”

Neither octopus nor pigeon are on the menu here, and given “the meat situ” the lamb and spinach Rose has ordered for us to share, along with chickpeas in yoghurt and dahl, is a naughty choice. It is, however, very, very tasty.

Sharing food is a serious business for Rose, and she’s not one to run the risk of food envy.

“If me and Will were going to share a punnet of strawberries I’d be so worried about some of them being better than the others

I would have to cut each of them in half,” she says, aware of how demented that sounds. “You know, sometimes there’s one strawberry that’s mushy? If I had it I would feel there had been an injustice in the world.”

Rose has recently finished touring her fourth album, *No Words Left*. Its stark, emotionally raw songs are the best of her career so far, but given they were born from a period of severe self-doubt and depression, playing them live can be a gruelling experience.

“I love this record but it was a tough period,” she says. “It’s hard to meet people’s faces when you’re playing. All I need to do is look at all these people and think, ‘You poor fuckers.’ I’m not giving them *anything* to smile at.”

Touring, of course, does have its perks – not least for the gastronomically adventurous. During a recent trip to Singapore, she was invited to dinner at a fan’s house where the family were celebrating the end of Ramadan. “The table was full of *amazing* food. It was like, ‘Is this a joke?’” she marvels. “If a fan says to you, ‘I want my family to cook for you’, I can tell you from experience that it is always good. Always.”

In 2016, Rose embarked on a self-funded tour of Latin America, asking local fans to put her up after each show. The warm reception she received clearly still moves her to this day, although it was also the first hurdle in her vegetarianism.

“I’d been vegetarian for two years but living with families you can’t be like, ‘Oh, I’m vegetarian actually’,” she recalls. “We had this steak in Chile – it was amazing, the mum wrapped it in bacon...”

Her eyes roll back into her head at the memory. All this talk of food and we’ve neglected to finish our own, so what’s left is packed up into take-away containers. A very

British dance around who is going to pay is then followed by one about who is going to claim the spoils of lunch.

“No, no, I’ve got my Thai tonight and then I’d have to take it all the way to Brighton. Give it to one of your colleagues!” she implores. We know better than to argue. As the members of the Q office who scrape the tubs clean later on would concur, when it comes to food, Lucy Rose knows her onions. *CHRIS CATCHPOLE*

CAN I  
TAKE YOUR  
ORDER,  
MS ROSE?



### Favourite restaurant?

“I’d say this one. I could bring in a cutting of this piece next time I come here.”

### Most hated foodstuff?

“I don’t like big lumps of melted cheese. You know, if you’re eating a lasagne with too much

cheese on top and it feels like you’ve swallowed chewing gum.”

### Dream dining companion?

“Joni Mitchell.”

### Death Row dinner?

“My mum’s Sunday roast with **chocolate Angel Delight** for pudding. I love Angel Delight, I’ve got some in the fridge at home.”







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**Seventh heaven: Nérija** (clockwise from top left, Shirley Tetteh, Sheila Maurice-Grey, Rio Kai, Nubya Garcia, Lizy Exell, Rosie Turton and Cassie Kinoshi) jazz things up.

## Breaking

# NÉRIJA

Dancefloor-ready jazz grooves from forward-thinking London seven-piece.

**M**any young bands fret over their live shows, but few tear up their setlist just minutes before the biggest performance of their careers.

For rising jazz stars Nérija, due to perform at Latitude in 2015, there was no option. After all, it was 11pm, they were about to follow banging house duo The 2 Bears and laid-back jazz instrumentals just weren't going to cut it.

"Everyone in the crowd was going for it and we realised we had to reorganise our set and just play really hard," says guitarist Shirley Tetteh, still sounding surprised their plan B kept the crowd raving. "Once we saw their reaction it was like, 'Oh my God, we found a way to make this work!' Playing improvised music with grooves isn't new, but we discovered it was possible in a really visceral way. I'm always interested in how music can be complex and still have something that everyone can participate in."

Four years on, that inclusive attitude has made Nérija (pronounced ne-ree-ah, which means "light of God" in Hebrew) the latest flowering of a dynamic London scene that's redefining jazz. With a sound based around live improvisation that draws on modal jazz alongside more dancefloor-friendly styles such as Afrobeat, the seven-piece group are now being swept onto the same festival bills and playlists as forward-thinking contemporaries Sons Of Kemet and Ezra Collective.

"It's lovely to be part of the scene," says Tetteh. "I love the people in it, they're my really good friends. Even if a lot of us are aware these things come and go..."

Formed in 2013 out of an initiative by jazz development programme Tomorrow's Warriors to encourage more young women into music, Nérija started out as an all-female collective. But when bassist Rio Kai joined in 2018 it became clear musical chemistry mattered more than gender. "It's a tricky thing because people seem interested in how many women are in the band," admits Tetteh. "But we don't really care." Kai himself is equally untroubled: "The focus has always been the music rather than the band's image."

That focus pays off on their expansive

debut *Blume*, an album that radiates positivity without sacrificing any of the genre's complexity, tracks such as *Riverfest* dipping into Ghanaian highlife and loose-knit funk grooves with a carefree disregard for traditional forms. "I think that's the attitude: anything can be jazz," agrees trombonist Rosie Turton. "We don't feel confined to writing within a genre. We open it up to everything."

Like most of Nérija's contributors, Turton

has her own side-project, Rosie's Sive. Saxophonist Nubya Garcia is an acclaimed solo artist, fellow sax virtuoso Cassie Kinoshi is the driving force behind SEED Ensemble, whose members also include Tetteh and Kai, drummer Lizy Exell performs with swing

outfit Old Hat Jazz Band, while trumpeter Sheila Maurice-Grey plays in the backing band for grime veteran Kano. Unsurprisingly, it can be hard making schedules line up.

"We're constantly figuring it out," sighs Tetteh. But she insists that when everyone does get in the same room, the magic is still there. "There's something very real about how we grew up playing alongside each other. It feels special to me." She's not alone. Nérija's vision is about to make everyone who hears them feel the same way. *RUPERT HOWE*

**For Fans Of:**  
**Ezra Collective,**  
**Alice Coltrane,**  
**Nubya Garcia**  
**Get This Track:**  
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# Cash For Questions

**THIS MONTH: Sam Fender**

WORDS NIALL DOHERTY PHOTOGRAPHS GIANANDREA TRAINA

THE STARS!  
PROBED!!  
BY YOU!!!

Healy's number, but I don't think he knows I've got his number. I haven't texted him yet. I might start pranking Matty Healy, yeah.

**You were very briefly in an episode of Vera. If you could have a cameo/role in any other TV show or movie, what would it be?**

**Ryan Hutchison, Sunderland**

Star Wars. I'm putting the call out now, I want to be in Star Wars. I'd be anything. I'd make a great Stormtrooper. I'd be like, "Why aye, these aren't the droids you're lookin' for, fuckin' daft c\*\*t." I played a dead body in Vera for approximately 10 seconds. I'm ready for anything. I was pretty good at it, you know. I held my breath and had my eyes open under water. Pretty dead.

**How often do you use your VIP Greggs card?**

**Joe Stead, York**

Every day. Whenever we go to service stations, I buy all the boys pasties. I love it. My favourite is the sausage, bean and cheese melt. And I like a straight-up sausage roll. And I like a chicken bake. And I also like the sandwiches. And the stottie bread, but you only get that in the Geordie Greggs. I went in and pretty much cleared out the shop once, I got about 40 pasties. The VIP Greggs card is the best thing I've ever had. I'd cry if I lost it, it's my prize possession. All the time, everyone's like, "Howay, take us to Greggs, give us your Greggs card." I can't keep fleecing the same one, so I've gotta alternate between different Greggs. I can't just keep fucking up the same North Shields Greggs, people would be sick of us if I keep going in there. But also it's getting to the point now where if I go into the local Greggs and people see us, they're like, "Howay Sam, get us a pasty?" Ah, fuck off!

## The Geordie star replies to your queries about the scent of Sting, receiving abuse from Lewis Capaldi and why he's similar to Spider-Man.

**B**eing accosted in the street still feels strange to Newcastle singer-songwriter Sam Fender, but the gregarious 23-year-old is getting used to it. His arrival at The Social in Central London has been delayed after stopping to meet the swathe of fans who were waiting for him outside Radio 1's HQ but Fender is happy to stop and chat. As long as he's able to chat, that is: earlier this year, he had to cancel a handful of shows and festival appearances after losing his voice. Since then, it's been about protecting his cherished vocal cords, which has meant he's sometimes had to respond to fan enquiries by writing, "I can't talk, I'm sorry" on his phone and holding it up to them. He has to watch how many shows he does now – not more than two in a row is the rule – and says he can't really party if he's on tour. "I had a couple of drinks last night and that was it," he says, taking a seat in The Social's downstairs bar. "If my voice goes, I can't do my job."

Business is good for Fender right now. He began the year by winning the Critics' Choice at the Brit Awards, and will end it with chart success for his debut album, *Hypersonic Missiles*. It's the week before release and Fender says he's "excited. I can't wait. I'm really nervous but I cannot wait." Before they all rush out to buy the record, those adoring fans have some questions for him...

**Who's the most famous person in your phone contacts?**

**Kirsty Simmons, Suffolk**

I've got Stormzy, Elton John,

Steve Van Zandt from Bruce Springsteen's band. They're all in there under their own names, there's no code names. Although I've got a code name for Stephen Graham, the actor, he's a friend. I call him Combo cos that was his character in *This Is England*. He's saved as Combo. I think I've got Matty

**"I use my VIP Greggs card every day. It's the best thing I've ever had. I'd cry if I lost it, it's my prize possession."**



Howay! (above) Greggs – Fender's pastry-themed paradise; (left) a Stormtrooper – another possible career path for the great man.

GETTY, ALAMY



He really does give a toss:  
Sam Fender, The Social,  
London, 4 September, 2019.





# Cash For Questions

**If you were a North East tour guide for a day, what sights would your tour take in?**

**Jess Taylor, Leeds**

I would show everybody the coast, I'd show them Fish Quay in North Shields. I'd show them The Ouseburn in Byker, a district with canals and bars. I'd show them the Quayside with the bridges and the Tyne Bridge and the Sage and the Baltic art museums, I'd show them my favourite restaurants, I'd take them for an Italian at Marco Polo, I'd take them for some amazing vegan food at The Ship Inn. There's not a place I wouldn't show them. I'd even show them the bottom of the Shields, it's rough and ready – it's great, man.

**What's the most embarrassing item of clothing you own?**

**Mhairi Glover, Brighton**

My friends told me that buying a sleeveless denim jacket would be a good idea once. I did that, wore it once and I'll never wear it again. There are photos of me wearing it and I thought I was pretty cool. I looked like fucking Teen Wolf or something. It was £5 from a charity shop, my mate was like, "Get this, it looks amazing!" but he was just pulling my leg and I was gullible. It dawned on me about 24 hours later when I was wearing it and everyone was calling me a c\*\*t.

**Did you get to chat to Bob Dylan or Neil Young when you supported them in the summer?**

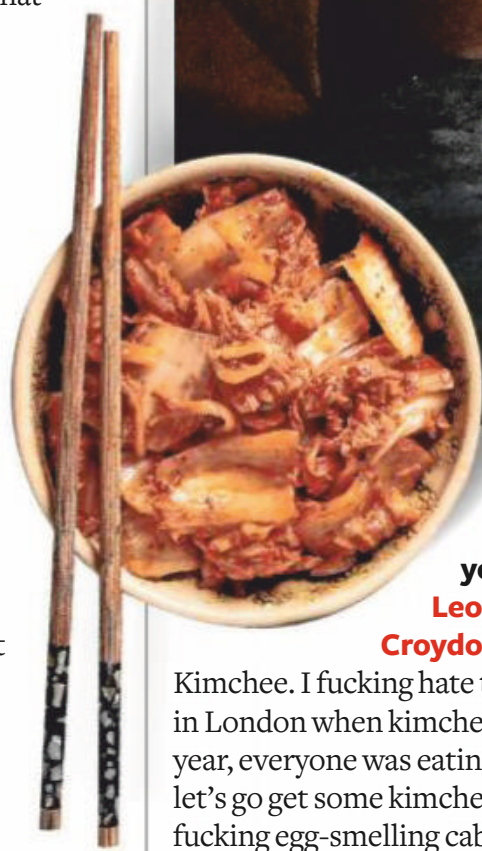
**Rory Butcher, Northampton**

Absolutely not. Did I fuck. Couldn't get anywhere near them. I tried. I saw Jimmy Fallon, he was backstage. He's lovely. But I didn't get near Bob. I don't know what I'd say, I'd probably just cry.

**What's the worst job you've ever had?**

**Conrad Wilson, Stockport**

Call centre work for a debt collection company that used to rip people off, people who had liquidated debts. I used to cold call old ladies and essentially rip them off. I was naïve, I didn't realise we were ripping them off until I saw that out of over 400 clients or something, only one debt was recovered. I hated it. They used to count how many hours you were doing every week and you'd get bollocked if you didn't meet the requirement. So I used to ring up this company that I knew would leave me on hold and then just leave the phone down and it would clock my hours up and I'd just eat a Pot Noodle. Then I'd pass my weekly hour thing.



**What's the most disgusting meal you've ever eaten?**

**Leonie Bratley, Croydon**

Kimchee. I fucking hate the stuff. I had it in London when kimchee was the thing last year, everyone was eating kimchee. "Oh, let's go get some kimchee!" No, let's not. It's fucking egg-smelling cabbage. No one wants to eat that, it's horrible. It's literally fucking horrible. I've never eaten something as disgusting as that. I literally was like, "That's

the worst thing I've ever tasted in my life, it smells like eggs, tastes like eggs, looks like fucking cabbage and has the texture of slimy fucking sluggy lettuce pickled." Absolutely disgusting.

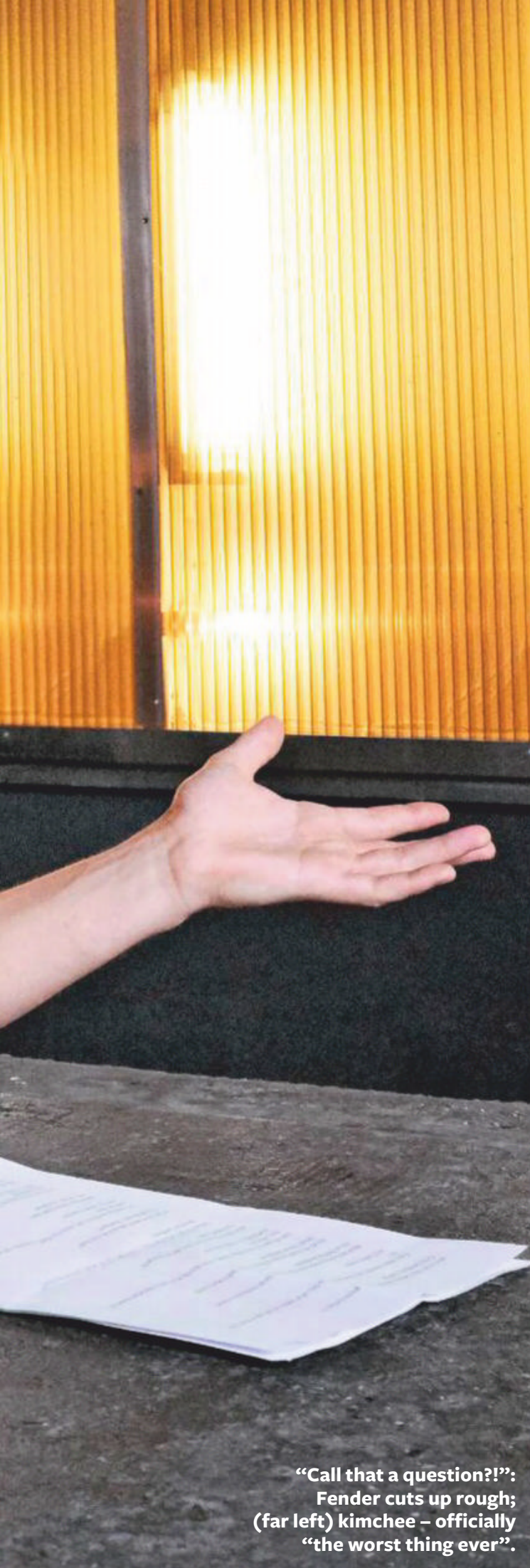
**You can only play the kazoo or the ukulele for the rest of your life, what are you picking?**

**Sally Parkinson, via Q Mail**

Kazoo. Ukuleles are fucking awful. They should all be burnt. They should be decommissioned. Ukulele is nice in utero







**“Call that a question?!”:**  
Fender cuts up rough;  
(far left) kimchee – officially  
“the worst thing ever”.

with something else. If you play a ukulele, plucked strings as a part of a song, it's nice. What I cannot stand is some middle-class kid at the busker's nights with his desert boots and “yah” voice singing Vance Joy's Riptide, clanging the fuck out of an out-of-tune ukulele. Like, come on. That's never ever going to be cool, so let's stop pretending that it is.

**Did you ever fancy a cartoon character growing up?**

**George Lawrence, Birmingham**

Yeah, I fancied Roger Rabbit's lass, Jessica

**Stiff competition:**  
Jessica Rabbit, an early  
“inspiration” for Sam.



**“All of the kids that were dicks in school ask me to play their wedding and I just tell them to fuck off.”**

Rabbit. It's a classic one. My brother put on Roger Rabbit. He's 10 years older than me. I think I got a little stiffy when Jessica Rabbit came on, had a little bump in my pants. I think I was about six.

**If you were Prime Minister, what would be the first thing you'd do?**

**Lucas Young, Swindon**

Stop Brexit. I'd give the country another chance to vote for Remain. Actually, no, I wouldn't. If I was Prime Minister, I'd do an Emperor Palpatine and I'd just become a dictator. I'd take the country by force, build a Death Star in Swan Hunter's shipyards in Wallsend in Newcastle. There's loads of room there. I'd build a Death Star there and basically be an evil emperor. Who'd be my Vader? Stormzy. He'd kick the shit out of anyone.

**Favourite crisp flavour?**

**Kim Barnes, Norwich**

Salt and vinegar Squares. I love them.

**Did you consider performing under any other names before going with your own?**

**Greg Male, Torquay**

I did, yeah. I didn't want to go under my name because it sounds like a stage name, cos of it being Fender. I had a few names kicking about for a while. I had one which is the name of my grandad – my grandad had a really mad name. He was a tin-miner and he was called Enos and I thought that was cool as fuck, so

**It doesn't blow: a kazoo, Fender's choice over the “awful” ukulele.**

I was gonna be his name. In the end, I thought, “Fuck it.” My manager said, “Just be proud, that's your name.” So I did.

**Who are you backing in the big row of 2019 – Alan Shearer or Michael Owen?**

**Giles McGrath, Belfast**

Shearer, obviously. It's very hard for people to sympathise with Michael Owen complaining about not signing for Liverpool and signing for Newcastle when you're on £120,000 a week. It's hard for people to be like, “Poor Michael.” I followed the argument, seen what Michael had to say, seen what Shearer had to say, and I was like, “Well, Shearer.” Owen is questioning Shearer's loyalty to the club because he thought about signing for Liverpool. Everyone has temptation. He stayed on and was a legend at Newcastle. So shut up Michael, you dafty.

**Now that you're living the high life with a Brit Award and chart success, what are you going to write about in your songs?**

**Paige Wilkinson, Cheltenham**

I'm gonna carry on writing about the world and probably the people from my hometown. It didn't stop Bruce Springsteen from writing about New Jersey for the rest of his life. There's a million Shakespeare-esque stories >>



# Cash For Questions

happening every single day in Shields. A guy walked into a taxi rank the other day with a machete in his head and a bag full of dead kittens, according to a taxi driver. It's either bollocks or it's true. But I heard it from a taxi driver, so you never know.

**Tell us something about your mate Lewis Capaldi that would surprise us.**

**Lee Kennedy, Ipswich**

Whenever he hears [*Fender's single*] Hypersonic Missiles, he sends us a video basically calling us a bastard. He goes, [*puts on angry Scottish voice*] "Critics' Choice bastard." He sends me videos of him pissed in the back of taxis whenever my song comes on, just to call me a bastard. But really he's the one laughing cos he's fucking massive. He's a diamond, I love him.

**What does Sting smell like?**

**Stu Wood, via Q Mail**

Mahogany and greatness. He came to one of my shows in Toronto. I was shitting myself, considering I'd talked about him losing his virginity on Twitter. He was lovely, a lovely guy. He's got a good sense of humour. He's a bit of a party animal on the sly. We talked about the North East. I said, "Ah, the local paper keeps misquoting me and saying loads of shit that isn't true," and he gave us a hug and went, "Get used to it." My accent is always heavy but his isn't, he's got a transatlantic voice for talking to Americans, but he got really Geordie when he was talking to me. He started off like, [*thespian-style Geordie accent*] "I'm really proud of you, it's the future of rock'n'roll right here," and I was like, "Fucking hell, that's a massive compliment." Then I was talking about Shiremoor or something and I went, "Oh, there's a new Metro stop in Shiremoor" and he went full Geordie, "Thar's a Me'ro in Shy'moor?" It was really funny.

**Web browser: Spider-Man, Fender's personal superhero.**



**“If I was Prime Minister, I’d do an Emperor Palpatine and become a dictator. Stormzy would be my Vader. He’d kick the shit out of anyone.”**

**Which superhero do you most identify with?**

**Beth Collins, Bristol**

I'd probably say Spider-Man, because Spider-Man was a dork in school, got pushed round by a bunch of dickheads and then he became cool as fuck. Spider-Man then went around braying bad guys, but my version of the story is now all of the kids that were dicks to us in school ask us to play their wedding and I just tell them to fuck off, and it's the greatest day ever when I do. I go, "Absolutely not, I hate your guts, I'd rather play your funeral."

**Your star sign is Taurus, meaning you're a bit of a stubborn dark horse. Is that an accurate personality assessment?**

**Orla McLaughlin, Letterkenny**

I don't believe in star signs, personally – I think it's a load of bollocks. I don't think you can derive your personality from the position of a star when you're born. It just sounds like mental hippy bollocks to me. But, sadly, I am exactly what my star sign says I am. I'm stubborn, I like food, I'm a dark horse, all of those things. I like being hedonistic, I don't like being told that I'm wrong. But I do think that's quite a big thing, I think most people are stubborn at

some point in their life, most people have moments of hedonism, moments of being a dark horse, so it's very broad, isn't it?

**What would you rather be: a firefighter, policeman or paramedic?**

**Erin Hayward-Lang, via Q Mail**

When I was a kid I wanted to be a firefighter, cos I'm called Sam. I used to pretend to be Fireman Sam every day. But I wouldn't mind being a copper, it sounds interesting. My mate's dad's a copper and he told me that most of the time all you're doing is you park the car up next to the river and fucking eat McDonald's. He said that's all he does, sits in his office eating takeaways, park the car up, watching the river go by. He said apart from that he's just chasing people and banging them up. Actually, I'm gonna go for paramedic. My grandad was an ambulance driver and my uncle was a paramedic, so it's in the Fender family. I'll carry on that tradition. **Q**

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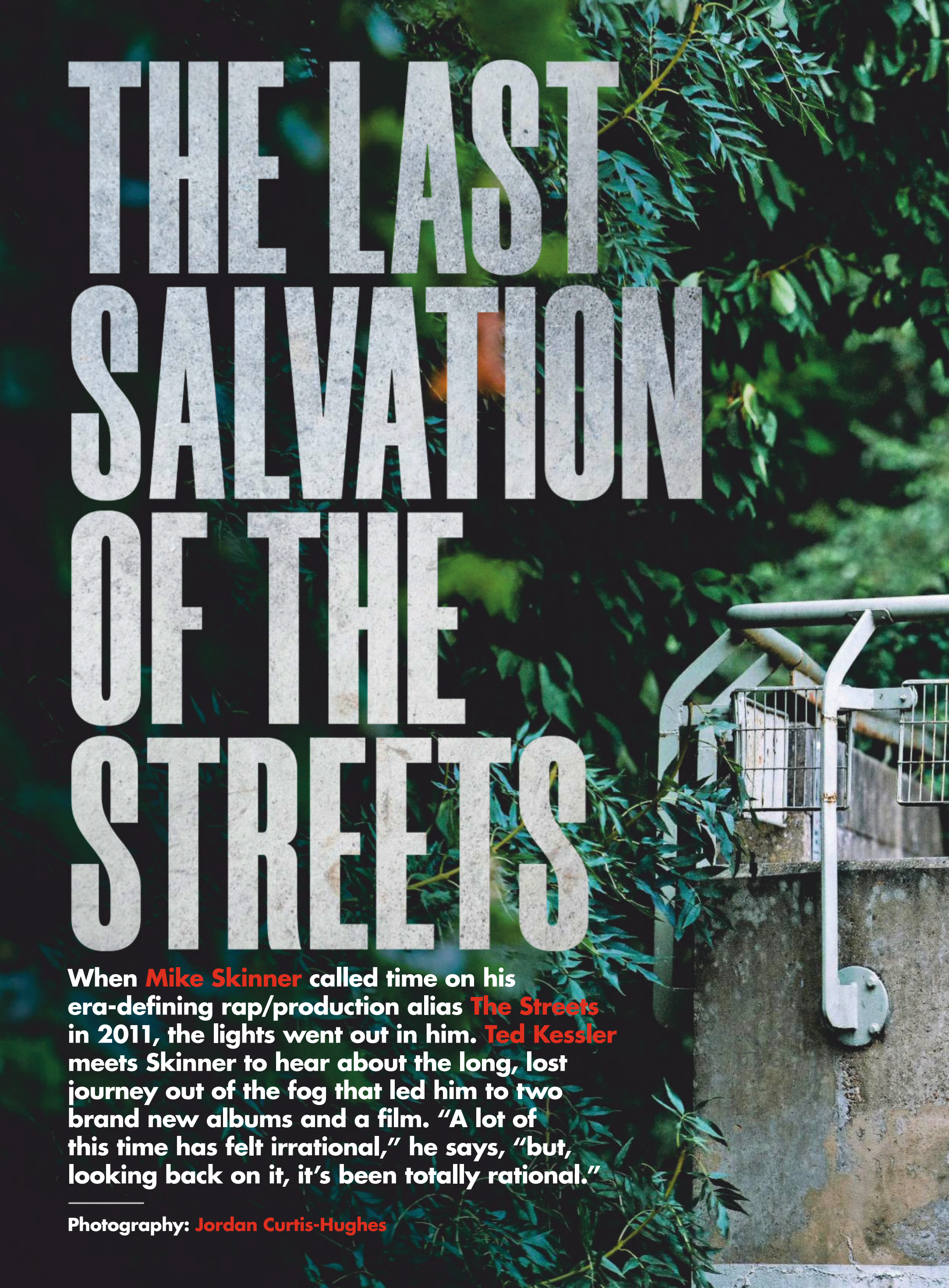
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The background of the entire page is a photograph. It shows a concrete wall on the right side, with a metal railing that has a wire mesh section. Green leaves and branches are visible in the foreground and background, partially obscuring the wall and railing. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving it a moody feel.

# THE LAST SALVATION OF THE STREETS

When **Mike Skinner** called time on his era-defining rap/production alias **The Streets** in 2011, the lights went out in him. **Ted Kessler** meets Skinner to hear about the long, lost journey out of the fog that led him to two brand new albums and a film. "A lot of this time has felt irrational," he says, "but, looking back on it, it's been totally rational."

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Photography: **Jordan Curtis-Hughes**



Back on The Streets:  
Mike Skinner, Highgate,  
London, 20 August, 2019.





Taking it step by step:  
Mike Skinner on home  
turf in North London.





# IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH

from the outside, but the Café Rouge on Highgate High Street, in the leafiest part of leafy North London, is even more underwhelming inside.

A dingy, split-level brasserie, dimly-lit and smelling slightly of bleach on a bright, hot July

morning, this is nonetheless where many of the local famous people hang out. Today, with his back to the door and a coffee in front of him, sits our man in black, the voice of his generation, Mike Skinner, aka The Streets. He is the only customer in here.

"Sometimes, you can come here and the other people in will be Liam Gallagher, Jamie Oliver and Ray Davies, all sitting separately, all ignoring each other," says Skinner, deadpan, his default mode of communication. Actors Matt Smith and Jude Law, news anchor Jon Snow, director Christopher Nolan and supermodel Kate Moss are also regulars. "George Michael used to come here too," adds Skinner, "but our paths never crossed."

The reason so many stars are customers is simple, he says. "It's close to home and, because it's not somewhere anyone from Highgate would go to normally, it's always quiet. So you can have a meeting with your accountant or do an interview without being bothered."

This strength is also its weakness. The celebrity pound is not worth more than anyone else's and the boarded-up Côte across the road is testament to how little economics respects familiarity.

"Oh, it'll close down," agrees Skinner, "it can't survive on two lattes a week from me and Liam Gallagher, plus some poached eggs for Ray Davies. It'll close down, despite its usefulness to us and its brand-recognition, and we'll all shuffle into whatever replaces it. We won't like it as much at first, but after a while we'll forget all about the happy times we've spent in here..."

He smiles, goofily. We are here this morning to discuss the revival of another once famous brand which lost its way, The Streets, Skinner's ground-breaking, era-defining British rap alias he operated under from 2001, before retiring the name without much fuss after five albums in 2011, tired, deflated and keen to move from music into films. A premature retirement, it turns out.

For much of these past eight years, he didn't really know what he was doing, creatively. Personally, he was raising two children, Amelia and George, with his wife Claire in Highgate, and that has helped curb some of his worst anxieties. "That keeps you busy," he agrees. "But what else are you going

to do? I know some really fucked people. They've too much time to worry." Having kids manages that trait of his personality. "With kids, you can't really get anxious. You never hear of parents getting mentally ill over their kids, do you? Like, they might become alcoholics. And fat. And get divorced. But you still have to hold it together if you are going to stick at the parenting game."

In the back of his mind, he knew he wanted to make a film. He knew he had to create things, "because I become a liability to myself when I'm not creative, not suicidal exactly, but it's a problem." He knew he had to keep busy and, though it only appeared to him as a motive once he'd been through the journey, he knew he had to do lots of different things and then he'd work something out.

"At the time, I was pretty lost after I stopped The Streets. I've been clinically depressed, not because of that specifically but, you know. Towards the end of the first seven years away," that goofy smile again, "I felt like I'd maybe wasted my time. It's only now, looking back, that I can see it was all building up to the same place. I just didn't know it."

He wrote scripts for films that were going to be impossible to get funded. He directed some music videos and commercials, in order to gain behind-the-camera hours. He made a couple of albums with Robert Harvey, once of The Music but also a touring member of The Streets, under the name of The D.O.T. He released some songs as The Darker The Shadow The Brighter The Light, songs that sounded quite a bit like late-period The Streets. But, most significantly he now realises, he started to DJ, playing bass tracks at the Tonga club nights he put on with his pal, the East London-via-Manchester dance promoter/artist Murkage Dave, as well as at clubs on his own, up and down the country.

It was during these long, lonely solo missions to Liverpool, Leeds, Bristol, Cardiff, Stoke, playing bass sets littered with his own new beats, to rooms full of people often half his age who hadn't come to see him, but were there instead to dance "and meet members of the opposite sex" that the clouds parted, the light shone upon him and he had a moment of blinding clarity. He had to get the band back together. Even if the band is actually just him.

"The reason I stopped doing The Streets was because I wanted to make a film. And the reason I've started it again is because I wanted to make a film." He shrugs. "A lot of this time has felt irrational, but, looking back on it, it's been totally rational. I've spent the last eight years writing a film and an album, but I just didn't know it until last year."

&gt;&gt;

"I stopped doing The Streets because I wanted to make a film. And I've started it again because I wanted to make a film. I spent eight years writing a film and an album, but I just didn't know it."



Hang with the DJ: Skinner and his Tonga club night co-creator, Murkage Dave, at Lovebox, London, 2018.



**B**efore The Streets, British rap voices rarely sounded local. Mike Skinner changed that. Now, you'll never hear an MC from London or Manchester rap in an American accent. Imagine Stormzy with a Noo Yoik twang or Loyle Carner's softly-spoken verses coming out Californian rather than Croydon. You're more likely today to hear slang identifiably from different London postcodes than any American argot. That was unimaginable before The Streets' first single, *Has It Come To This?*, in 2001, when Skinner asked listeners to lock down their aerials. He altered the culture's direction of travel.

The Streets documented the pleasures and mundanities of suburban British youth with an acute eye for detail and a pitch-perfect ear for contemporary idiom. He was a poet, and everyone knew it. Skinner stuffed funny, relatable insights about love, lust, music, boredom, material goods, hedonism and friendship into deliberately too-tight verses, not over hip-hop beats, but instead laid out upon his own homebrewed version of UK garage, that slightly chintzy British take on house that was big at that time. The Streets sounded new.

Skinner, from Barnet in outer North London, but raised in Birmingham was, like many of his post-acid house generation,

a kid who loved club music but didn't go clubbing because clubs were prohibitively expensive for someone working at Burger King, as he was, and often too lairy to be worth the bother anyway.

So he distilled his own lyrical bedroom version of garage, influenced not by mirror balls reflected onto dancefloors, but by what he heard crackling away on pirate radio under the duvet and booming from parked cars by the local hangout. He created his own sound, the Original Pirate Material that gave his debut album its title. And unlike the UK garage of the charts that celebrated an unobtainable lifestyle of champagne sprayed upon well-heeled cliques beyond the VIP rope in Ayia Napa, his glamour seemed within reach: a decent-sized telly, PlayStation, an eighth of hash and up to three people in your phone you could rely upon to answer. He unlocked an entirely **new way of writing** and in doing so was more than a one-man band. **He was a one-man new wave.**

With *The Streets*, he had an audience in mind: everyone who lived for the **same things he did**, as well as the club music heads. Instead, he

"How I write: I write something shit. Listen to it. Then the worst bits get changed. Repeat."

**The man in black:**  
Skinner in Miloco  
Studio, North  
London, July 2019.





found mainly music journalists and their readers, indie kids and possibly their parents. He built an audience this way but he felt let-down on his own terms until his second album, a conceptual masterpiece called *A Grand Don't Come For Free* about one man's journey to recover lost money and love, which featured a single, *Dry Your Eyes*, that soundtracked all of Britain's many sporting near-misses on TV at the time. It alone helped propel *The Streets* into all the front rooms and minicab offices Skinner had wanted to reach with his more immediate debut.

*A Grand Don't Come For Free* sold three million copies worldwide and made him rich. It also made him incredibly anxious. He'd satisfied his mission after two albums, after all. Where now? The rest of *The Streets*' career was an attempt to document that success, the dubious charms of its trappings and the paradoxical feelings of failure this all provoked within Skinner. His audience took a sniff of this new breeze and, despite some cracking singles along the way, they slowly wandered off in increasing numbers with each release. It was as if Skinner had a very slow puncture in his inflatable canoe, but no idea how to fix it.

Although only 33 by the time he retired *The Streets*, he felt old and worn. He could feel his disposition changing. His emotions had always been in the red in *The Streets*, but he sensed a new mood setting in. One he didn't really want to write songs about.

"Every day in *The Streets* was scary, because you feel totally out of control," he explains. "Anxiety, paranoia and general fear. That's what my 20s were like. Whereas my 30s were closer to depression. It's more, just, like..."

He lets out a huge groan.

"You just try and push yourself through this feeling of existential... depression. I'm not trying to say one is worse than the other. It just feels different."

Towards the end of *The Streets* he noticed that his audience was growing old with him, without being replenished by youthful new recruits. This he took badly. He was disconnecting from the cutting edge. He felt out of intuitive touch.

"When you're young," he says, "it's very clear who you think you are. Other young people influence that. There's a stage where you start to lose that identity and very gradually it's just out of reach. Then you are kind of guessing or acting. It's the curse of the producer, really. How do you stay connected to that instinct?"

**"Christ, what comes next?" Skinner waits for inspiration.**



**W**hen he started to DJ, he understood quickly he couldn't be a celebrity DJ. "It had to be proper raves." Skinner knew, too, that he could've played '90s rap or garage and he would've done very nicely, but it wouldn't have done him any good. So he reinvented himself as a DJ in the emerging bass music scene, throwing himself in at the deepest end. "My brother drives me quite a lot when I DJ because I can't drive," he says, "but he mostly sits in the car. I don't want a tour manager because I think it looks a bit silly having someone plug in your USB and headphones. Although there are plenty of DJs who have them..." he rolls his eyes. "I am a qualified engineer, after all. I know which lead goes where. And I was so insecure about being taken seriously as a DJ, there was no way I was going to act rock star."

So it would just be Mike Skinner on his own, faced with a roomful of 20-year-olds in Cardiff at 1.45am on a Sunday morning, all lost in their own worlds of intoxication, rhythm and lust, and it was up to him not to ruin their night. "It's brutal, but it teaches you what works, and what definitely doesn't."

His DJing acted as a form of extreme A&R when he eventually



**It takes two: at work with Greentea Peng (left), one of his *Send For Everyone* mixtape collaborators.**





dropped his own new music into sets, too. “I’d started to release tracks, but the test is, ‘Can I play them in clubs as well?’ That’s savage because there’s literally nothing worse than working for a couple of days on a remix, playing it in the club and then, after eight seconds of it, feeling, ‘Oh, my, God, this is fucking terrible.’ You know instantly. Hearing it alongside other stuff in that environment, it’s really unforgiving.”

These swigs of sour milk did him good, though, as he started to tweak his material so that he knew he wouldn’t taste it again, so that his own music would pass muster under the dry ice and muted lights.

A defining moment was when he released Grim Sickers’ *Open The Till* with Ghetts, in September 2017. “*Open The Till* was really big because I made it and it works every night. The Wave God record I made [*as The Darker The Shadow...*] works every night. You go from being really under-confident to being really confident. Because nobody can tell me *Open The Till* isn’t good. I don’t care what you think, to be honest. I’ve tested it to the maximum.”

That was the moment he thought, “I can do this.”

“I’ve seen those crowds and I know they’re not lying. Trust me, I’ve played a million things I know are fucking terrible too. But the confidence from those tracks working, that’s what made me think, ‘I can do this. I could do *The Streets* again.’”

Concurrently, he’d been writing a script about a DJ. “Imagine the guy from *A Grand Don’t Come For Free*,” he explains, “imagine he ended up becoming a DJ. He’s not that good, and he’s not that big. It’s that story.”

Skinner’s ideas started to coalesce around these two really energising endeavours: his music was back and he finally had a script that he knew he could make work.

He’d want to star in the film. He’d also want to direct it. But he could provide the soundtrack, too: it would be his next *Streets* album, called *The Darker The Shadow The Brighter The Light*. Same title as the film. “The music doesn’t tell the story of the film at all because then it becomes an opera, in a bad way. You couldn’t listen to the album and know the story of the film. But the music mirrors the story in feeling, I suppose. They work together.”

He got on a plane to see his long-time manager, Tim Vigon, who was now relocated from London to Los Angeles. Skinner had a plan that only his wife knew of. “When he came to visit me in LA to talk about working together again, I had no idea he was talking about

“Every day in *The Streets* was scary, because you feel totally out of control. Anxiety, paranoia and fear. That’s what my 20s were like. Whereas my 30s were a feeling of existential depression.”

**A driven man:**  
Mike Skinner,  
Highgate,  
London, 2019.



## ALL ORIGINAL MATERIAL

Ten classics from the Skinner vault.



**Has It Come To This?** (2001)  
Skinner’s debut single introduced a new decade’s Everyman, bursting onto the airwaves and ushering in decades of UK rap dominance.

**Let’s Push Things Forward** (2002)  
Corralling garage

heads and back-street brawlers, the great anthem of modern Britain values innovation and working-class unity over flag-waving.

**Weak Become Heroes** (2002)  
A generation’s lost memories are immortalised in this montage of a raver’s halcyon days. European Bob, you never really left us.

**It Was Supposed To Be So Easy** (2004)  
After the debut’s “day in the life of a geezer” came this pitch-perfect salvo

from album two’s hapless, paranoid, loveable grouch.

**Blinded By The Lights** (2004)  
Weak Become Heroes’ evil twin: what happens when, rather than a blissy rave field, your high spits you into inner-city dystopia?



**Empty Cans** (2004)  
The culmination of our highly-strung protagonist’s week from hell, and the moment our sceptical sympathy is rewarded, in glorious fashion.

**Prangin’ Out** (2006)  
What next after the party, the kebab stop, the commercial smash and the cab home? The spiral into fame malaise begins.

**Never Went To Church** (2006)  
Skinner’s enduring tribute to his late dad pulls no punches but goes deeper than schmaltz, hinting at



how grief helps us find ourselves.

**Open The Till** (2017)  
A return from obscurity with Grim Sickers, ft Ghetts and Skinner’s *Darker The Shadow...* pseudonym, pledging to live forever – “so far, so good”, he jests.

**You Are Not The Voice In Your Head** (2018)  
If only for the line, “You miss the point/ Like you miss the toilet”, this battle-of-the-sexes redux is prime *Streets*.  
JAZZ MONROE





The Streets,” recalls Vigon. “I thought we were doing something new and specific with Darker The Shadow. When he told me that he was bringing The Streets back, it was a total shock.”

Skinner’s idea was to book a Streets tour for spring 2018 to attract the light back upon them. This, he felt, would help in conversations about funding for the film. “We had two weeks to put together that full tour in total secrecy,” says Vigon. “Promoters were holding venues under assumed names and all sorts. That’s why the announcement, when it came, came out of the blue.”

The tour sold out immediately, but Skinner was fixated on finishing the album as he knew he’d need that when talking to studios about the film. After years of drifting, now, aged 40, he at last had his drive back. “It’s very easy for me to say, ‘Yeah, I’ve been DJing every weekend across the country for eight years to get to this point.’ But while it’s given me clarity, there was a long, long period when I had none,” admits Skinner. “I was a bit lost. I’ve definitely struggled with

my emotions and stress and mental health. Just being in nightclubs every weekend is a test, really. I could say it’s given me this incredible insight, when really it’s mainly sleep deprivation.”

But there is no question that unlocking this creative puzzle has definitely made Mike Skinner happier.

“I think we have a really basic need to put in effort and get reward. There was a bit in the middle of DJing when I was putting in a lot of effort and I wasn’t getting anything back. I really struggled with that. Now, though, I can see it for what it’s enabled.”

Tim Vigon for one, is enthused. “It became clear that this wasn’t a comeback about just doing a couple of victory lap tours,” he says, “that this is about the film and album project, which in many ways is the purest culmination of everything he’s done as a songwriter, rapper and storyteller. The comeback and the tour have been all part of a plan to do something new and the ambition is incredibly high for it all. He nearly worked himself into the ground getting the record together.” >>





Shooting for the film begins in the spring of 2020, with a release date for both film and album slated for next autumn. The album is finished.

“Totally done.”

And because *The Darker The Shadow The Brighter The Light* is not due out for another year at least, and because for the first time in a long time the wind is in his sails, Mike Skinner has decided to make another album to fill in the gap. He’s made a mixtape album called *Send For Everyone* that he’s been working on for the last few months with different collaborators on each track. It should be nearly ready for release by the time you read this.

“It’s a way of giving all the club stuff I’ve been doing a bit of focus,” he explains. “The Streets album is very shielded and personal. This is the DJ side. It’s a duets album, basically. Like Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett. But much more rap.”

He starts to list the artists involved. *slowthai* is on board. Ms Banks. Jesse James Solomon. Greentea Peng. The “handsome poet” Sonny Hall. IDLES are on a track...

“Normally, you might spend three months working on what the

album is going to be and then you have two years finishing it off. Because this is entirely a collaboration, a duets album, you’re constantly finishing it off. Always be closing, basically. Like, I’ve been texting Matty [*Healy*] from The 1975, and Octavian, and I’m not afraid to say that neither might come off, but... they might happen, too.”

Skinner says it’s an album he’s making that is almost out of his hands. *Send For Everyone* is due to be finished in three weeks, by the start of August, and yet he is still unsure of half of its contributors. In a few days, The Streets head off on tour to Australia. Will anything more be done by then? No idea.

“One day, Matty might be in London at the same time I am and... or, I might think of something on the plane, text him and that afternoon we could have a track. It’s just so random. It feels like there’s all these asteroids and planets just flying around, and every now and then, out of all these asteroids, one collides and is added to the Mike Skinner mixtape.”

He smiles that goofy smile again.

“It’s very, very... I don’t think I’ll make another mixtape album.”



**“Missed me?”:  
(left) Skinner on  
the comeback  
trail, O2 Academy,  
Birmingham,  
19 April, 2019.**

**S**

ix weeks later and the mixtape album, *Send For Everyone*, is not quite finished yet. There’s a new deadline of late September, possibly early October. It won’t be any later than that. It can’t be. To ensure this, manager Tim Vigon is now in charge of nailing the final involvement of the guest vocalists.

“Doing the mix album on my own was stressful,” admits Skinner. “I was feeling the stress, it started really affecting me, and Tim has removed a lot of that. I mean, he hasn’t actually got a vocal yet. The one thing I have learnt from this whole process is that unless you have the audio file, you don’t have anything. That is my hot take.”

It is a glorious day at the start of the August Bank Holiday, and Mike Skinner has invited us to The Strongroom Studios in Old Street, East London, to hear some of his two forthcoming albums. He is wearing head-to-toe black, as he always does. For the first few years of *The Streets*, the glory days, he was always in pastels and bold colours. Then he decided to paint the whole world black.

“It started off with packing for tours,” he explains. “With black you don’t worry about stains or creases. There’s also some kind of OCD thing going on. I don’t have to think. I just wear the same thing every day. Then you kind of get lost in the decision.”

After a while he decided that it would actually become a statement if he wore a colour. And he didn’t want to make that kind of statement.

“I’ve made it so easy for myself that I’ve actually made it really hard. I’d have to have an amazing reason to wear a colour now, otherwise everyone would be like, ‘Oh my God, you’re wearing a colour!’”

Recently, he was at a barbecue in a friend’s garden and it turned into an evening affair. He’d arrived only wearing shorts and a T-shirt, so someone lent him a jumper... >>

“I had an idea that honesty would be my thing. I’ll be honest. People will like that. But actually, it’s not honesty. Honesty isn’t my thing. My thing is what we have in common.”

**Let’s push things forward:  
Skinner gets carried away,  
Brixton O2 Academy,  
London, 25 April, 2019.**





“It was a red jumper. Which I put on.”

Guests asked him if he was feeling alright. Someone took out a phone to take a photo to send to his brother and Mike shouted, “NO!”

“It’s a bit weird, I know. I mean, everything I own is black. Everything. Apart from my laptop, that’s the only thing. It’s a bit like being addicted to smack. It starts off feeling nice, relaxing. Then it becomes normal. Then, without it, you don’t feel normal. You don’t feel that good either with it, but you can’t live any other way.”

He swings round in his chair and presses play. Let’s hear some of Send For Everyone.

Ominous strings build and we are propelled into one of the best Streets tracks you’ve ever heard. Every track he plays today is one of the best Streets tracks you’ve ever heard. None of them have titles yet, though, which is confusing for journalists. Of course, new music always sounds better on big studio speakers. But maybe not quite as good as this. It has the box-freshness of Original Pirate Material, but the crispness of 2019’s hard-won contemporary bass and beats know-how.

“This is slowthai here,” he shouts over the music. “Hopefully. Don’t have the vocal file yet. Tame Impala are interested. 1975, that’s a no. Octavian was very close. Might still be. I’ve learnt that artists don’t actually get it over the line. It needs a bit of corporate muscle. It’s an art, not a science.”

In the background, Skinner is rapping, “You know I’d give you a kidney/But just don’t ever take my charger.” He flips to the next track. Its heavy, bass-driven unease sounds a bit like Burial, but charged up on the front seat of the bus’s upper deck rather than slouched at the back. The rhythm is brutal. “This is the IDLES one.” A chorus kicks in: “None of us are getting out of this life alive,” sings Skinner.

He flips the track again to a sharp keyboard motif. It’s the song originally earmarked for The 1975. “I understand it,” he says. “They’re doing shows every day, making their own album. But also, I’ve been there. It’s one thing listening to a beat and saying, ‘Yeah, I can get on that.’ Then it’s another sitting on your own in front of a microphone imagining what you’re going to do. Sometimes, it’s like, ‘I don’t know what to do here on this track.’ I sympathise with Matty. I’ve felt that.”

Skinner plays a track featuring Jesse James Solomon, the South London rapper, built upon a huge organ break and with a space left for Eliza (formerly Eliza Doolittle) to sing the chorus. Then, there’s a more gentle shuffle with folk-rapper Hak Baker hogging the limelight: “I’ve got all the East End lads with me,” rhymes Baker, “bunch of twats mate, in all honesty...”

Birmingham’s Dapz On The Map pops up next and, as he listens to his own lines, Skinner says, “I know what I’m trying to say, but it can often take five rewrites to say it well. There are loads of lines here that, as we’ve been listening, I know I’m going to change.”

This is how he writes.

“It’s not writing so much as rewriting. That’s what I’ve always done. How I write: I write something shit. Listen to it. Then the worst bits get changed. Repeat.”

In many ways, this describes all writing, be it books or journalism. It’s always about rewriting.

“Yes, but not songwriting in my experience, except in maybe Nashville, where they have people who just write lyrics,” he says. “One of my best friends is a songwriter who does different sessions with production teams every day. I don’t think there’s a lot of rewriting going on. With rappers, there’s a pride thing too: I’m just going to do this verse once and that’ll be it, done. I’m the opposite. I think rewriting, the willingness to rethink, helps everything.”

For Skinner, the end product is all that matters. The journey there is immaterial. “That idea that a song captures a moment in time and can’t be altered because it’ll change the spirit, that is not helpful. It’s partly demo-itis: the inability to hear anything done differently to the original. I am really brutal. I’ll take the verse from one song and stick it in another if I think it’ll improve it.”

Working on the film has opened his eyes to the madness of



“I’d started to release tracks, but the test is, ‘Can I play them in clubs?’ There’s nothing worse than working for a couple of days on a remix, playing it in the club and then feeling, ‘This is fucking terrible.’”







Computer and booze:  
Skinner blows his top  
at the after-party in  
Birmingham, 2019.



# MIXMASTER MIKE

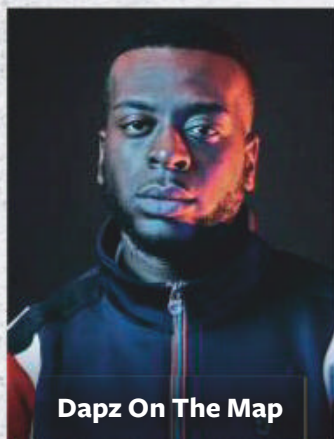
Mike Skinner on why he chose some of his guests on *Send For Everyone*.

## IDLES

"When I started this project I wanted to find as many musicians who seem to be doing a similar thing to what I've done in the past. IDLES come from a live band background but the way Joe [Talbot, singer] writes is more specific, like country or something."

## JIMOTHY

"A lot of people used to wonder whether what I was doing was a joke. I just had an idea of what I wanted to do and maybe that was funny but there was nothing funny about it to me. Whenever



Dapz On The Map

I speak to Jimothy, I get the same from him."

## DAPZ ON THE MAP

"One of the first grime MCs to bring a melodic side to his rapping. Very ahead of his time. For his surroundings he seems super-sensitive as well, which is mad."

## OSCAR #WORLDPEACE

"I've known Oscar for years. In a way I've seen him turn into a man, even though from the start he has always had a man's way of thinking. His version of rap has always pushed back against the stereotypes but from the inside rather than from the outside."

## DONAE'O

"One of the most total musicians I've ever come across."

## HAK BAKER

"It's easy to look at Hak and think about how cool it is that a Caribbean has decided

to do folk music. But I honestly don't think it has any more to do with him than picking up a guitar around the time he was in or out of prison and found that he was good at it. He brings with him all of the cultural stuff from his life and it obviously makes it sound super-new."

## KASIEN

"Modern rap has gotten very pill popping which is great for me because that's what I've always done. I think that it has got something to do with shifting taboos across cultures. But I call myself 'The Wave God' and Kasien is probably as wavy, if not more wavy!"

## JESSE JAMES SOLOMON

"Much more personal and up close than most rappers. Jesse James has been around for years but it's great that his intimate style has made it into mainstream rap."



Hak Baker

musicians. "Being unreasonable is allowed in music because the fans think it's interesting. And it is. But you just end up with a lot of unreasonable people who don't follow logic. In film, even if you are a temperamental director, to succeed you need to work as part of a team following logic. Otherwise, even the director can be removed from his own film. If I'm unreasonable, I'll be removed."

Replaced by Sofia Coppola.

"I really wouldn't object to Sofia Coppola replacing me."

He flips the track again. Now, he's going to play some of The Streets' artist album, *The Darker The Shadow*. The mood changes subtly: this is no longer jaunty, episodic Streets, now we are in wide-screen narrative Streets. It's like hearing new, modern versions of the first two Streets albums back-to-back.

After a few minutes in a couple of tracks each, he forwards to the climatic finale. A keyboard stabs urgently away, a bit like *Blinded By The Lights*, but the chase-scene version, with shades of gospel backing. Skinner raps: "There are crazy turns as you work through the present/Is it nature or nurture when you hurt your bredren?/ We pray in church for our personal heaven..."

He won't be changing any of these lines.

"No, I might re-perform some, but this all has been thoroughly safety-checked. It won't let you down."

"Kids chat on Googledocs now. But they are still saying, 'I fancy you. I hate her. I'm hungry. I need sugar.' You know, the medium changes but the message stays the same, really."

When he originally ended *The Streets*, Skinner said his celebrity-life was over. No more photo shoots, no more interviews. He'd had enough. Yet, here he is.

"Well, you need to get out of the house," he jokes. "The thing with it is that the more you do, the less you trust yourself. Everything you say becomes a liability. Ed Sheeran, the bigger he got, the more you could see that everything he said was being construed a million ways. When it gets like that, the risk is too big. You clam up."

This is not a problem for either Liam or Noel Gallagher, though.

"The Gallaghers always remind me of 50 Cent," decides Skinner. "Because he came up beefing too. Whatever strategy you came up on when you were young, you always return to. All bands have a thing and in the case of Noel, it's that he has an opinion on everything. But it gets to a point where he's just a man with an opinion on everything."

Mike Skinner has always had a thing, too, something he returns to. It was in his original masterplan.

"I had an idea that honesty would be my thing," he reveals. "I'll be honest. People will like that. But actually, it's not honesty. Honesty isn't my thing. My thing is what we have in common. There's honesty, but really it's our common ground. General and specific."

This is such a beautiful distillation of what *The Streets* is, that it feels in some ways that the previous 4000 words have been wasted. So often *The Streets* are described as being a voice of a generation, but actually it's what we have in common, general and specific.

"It's not generational," he says. "People still listen to Original Pirate Material. At the gigs, it's mainly young people getting on those songs. Shit doesn't change. They don't listen to the other stuff I did because it never worked then and it's not going to suddenly work now."

The only thing that changes, he says, is technology. Humans remain governed by natural impulse.

"Kids chat on Googledocs now. But they are still saying, 'I fancy you. I hate her. I'm hungry. I need sugar.' You know, the medium changes but the message stays the same, really."

And with that, Mike Skinner leans over and presses pause. That's it. Turn the page.



The phone's over there,  
mate: Skinner struggles  
with the art of the selfie,  
Highgate, August, 2019.







KIM GORDON

“People are  
ready for



Blurred lines: the multi-hyphenate  
Kim Gordon, The Rookery Hotel,  
London, 1 August, 2019.

# weirdness right now.”

Musician, memoirist, critic, visual artist, actor, fashion designer: **Kim Gordon** does not fit into any single job description easily. But it's as a founding member of avant-punks Sonic Youth that she first carved out her legendary status, and it's to music that she now returns, aged 66, with her first solo album. **Victoria Segal** hears her story.

Photography: **Lillie Eiger**



**Flash Gordon:  
the ex-Sonic Youth  
frontwoman plays  
the opening of Marc  
Jacobs's Grunge  
Redux Collection,  
New York,  
3 December, 2018.**

**I**n the early '60s, Professor C Wayne Gordon, a sociologist at UCLA, became the first person to name the tribes found in a typical American high school – the jocks, the geeks, the freaks, all those teenage subcultures so familiar from Grease or Mean Girls. It doesn't seem unreasonable to imagine that any child of his would have been affected by his work, made hyper-aware of social currency, of position and prestige, labels and hierarchies. "Oh, I don't think I ever felt like I fitted in," says his daughter, smiling. "I just always kind of felt like an outsider."

Musician, memoirist, critic, visual artist, actor, fashion designer: finding the single category that could contain Kim Gordon would tax any sociologist. Co-founder of Sonic Youth, she spent 30 years in a band which ricocheted against scenes –

**"See, I'm not too cool to smile!": Kim Gordon relaxes in London, 2019.**



**"I was interested in writing about men and music, a place where men were allowed to be emotional and more like a girl. So I'd say you have to look at men and music to maybe figure out what it's like to be a girl in a band."**

hardcore, noise, no wave, grunge, alt-rock – without ever wanting or needing to confine themselves inside any of them, their influence radiating outwards as they evolved through 15 albums. The band ended in 2011 after Gordon's marriage to bandmate Thurston Moore disintegrated ("the most conventional story ever" she wrote grimly in her 2015 autobiography *Girl In A Band*) but the loss of her personal and professional motherlode did not cause her to disintegrate too. Even in a career that's hardly been light on achievement, 2019 has witnessed a decisive display of Gordon's creative power. There have been two exhibitions of her art – Lo-Fi

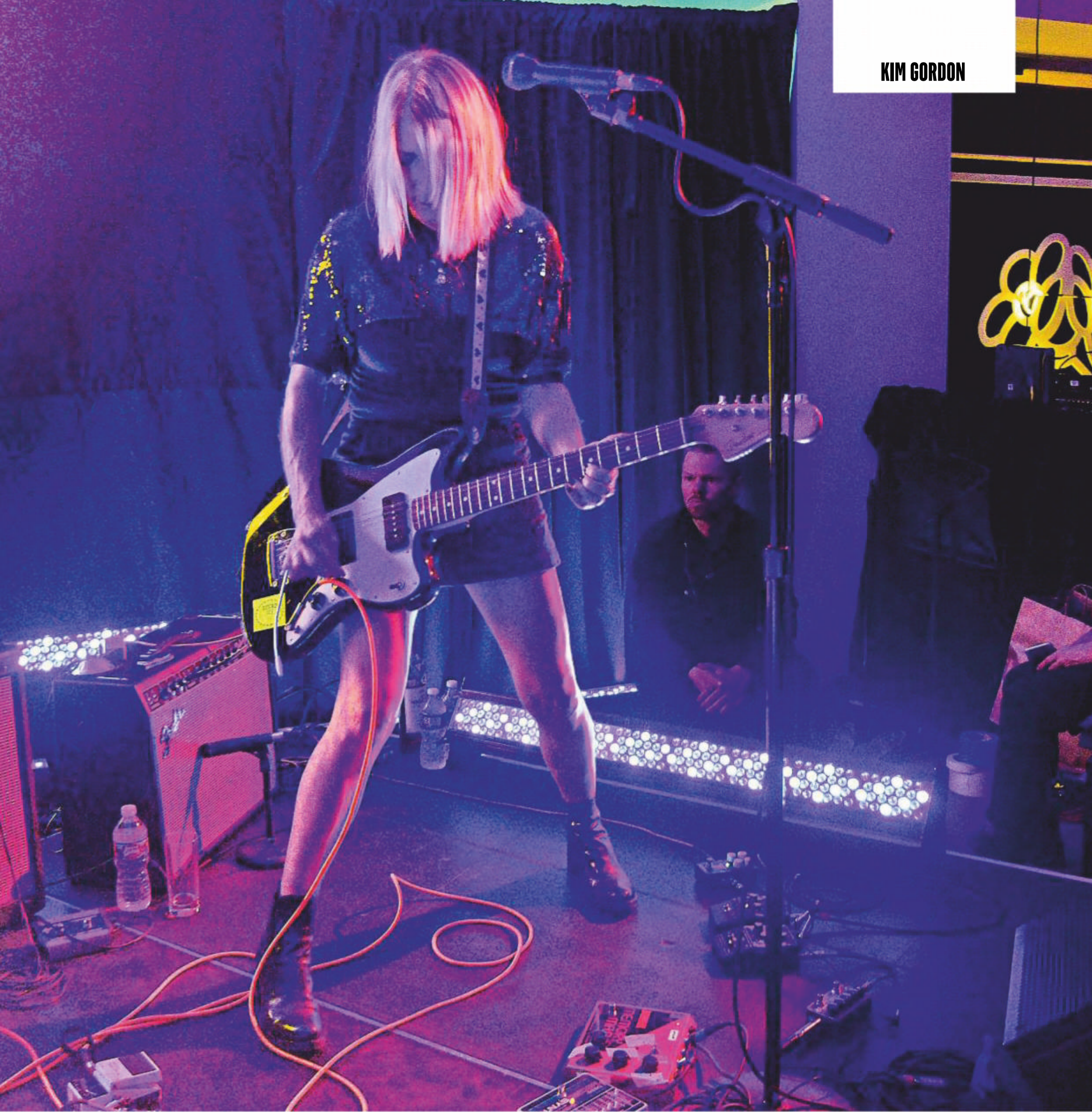
Glamour at Pittsburgh's Warhol Gallery and *She Bites Her Tender Mind* at Dublin's IMMA, picking up a thread dropped when she graduated from art school in California in 1980 and left straightaway for New York, intending to become an artist until she was diverted by music. The latter exhibition is one reason she's in Europe; the other is a brief residency at London's Cafe Oto as Body/Head, her astrophysical, metaphysical – often just gloriously physical – improvisational guitar duo with Bill Nace.

Even more significantly, at 66, Gordon is releasing her first solo album, the superb *No Home Record*. Given its themes of rootlessness, transience and corporate colonisation, it makes bleak sense that Q's first meeting with Gordon happens in the dismal grey shell of an East London chain hotel. She is so softly spoken that a burst of Hoovering at the other end of the foyer nearly obliterates her voice (although it does lend the tape an on-brand background of experimental static). If you were expecting New York ice and chill, her smile comes as a surprise – frequent, full-beam – although there's a sense that it's also a defence mechanism for a woman who has described herself as "extremely shy", a kind of full-stop, an energy shield lowering as she finishes what she has to say.

"In a sense, it is weird to have your individual ego out there. It is anxiety-provoking, I can't lie about that, but it's satisfying to be able to make something on your own and not have to have other people agree." She laughs.

At first, she explains over a cup of mint tea, she wanted to make "some weird jazz record – that was always in the back of my mind – but things just didn't turn out that way. Whenever you try to force it into some preconceived idea, that never really works for me." Abrasive, acidly astute, riddled with exhilarating noise and beats, *No Home Record* is not a pop record in any obvious way, but it feels as close as she might come. It was mainly recorded with producer Justin Raisen, who has worked with Charli XCX, Sky Ferreira and Angel Olsen. "Frankly, I don't know how it fits into music today," she says.





“I think it maybe hits on a couple of genres. I’ve always really liked hip-hop, but I’d never make a straightforward hip-hop record – it just wouldn’t seem right. But definitely, there are influences there – trap speeds. I think people are ready for weirdness right now.”

As the title suggests, *No Home Record* was partly inspired by her post-divorce move back to her hometown, Los Angeles, after nearly four decades on the East Coast. The industrial clang of *Murdered Out* takes its heavy metaphorical cues from LA car culture (“murdered out of my heart/covered in black matte spray”), while *Air BnB* – the means by which Gordon created a DIY writer’s residence to finish her book – satirises an “American idea” that turns the concept of “home” into an endless pick’n’mix of other people’s lifestyles and design choices (“Andy Warhol prints on the wall”). *Cookie Butter*, meanwhile, is fuelled by a vocal as wildly unsettling as anything she did with Sonic

Youth – “industrial metal supplies/cookie butter”. She says she doesn’t know what the title product is: “It’s like a brand name, but it’s a promise of something that sounds important.” Like technology – “it’s given us a lot, but it’s also taken away a lot.” She is intrigued by advertising she sees when jetlagged in airports, consumer slogans that become poetry when glimpsed from the corner of a tired eye.

Like her art – crumpled paper, black glitter circles, visible paint drips, vivid words – *No Home Record* is a big, tactile experience. Gordon is, she says, a hands-on, practical person, fascinated by physical materials: “I have a good spatial sense, put it that way.” At college, she took Martha Graham dance classes and has recently worked with choreographer Dimitri Chamblas on fearless kinetic improvised performances of dance and music. As a child, she went to a progressive “lab school” attached to UCLA where “it was all

>>



Don't mention the "G" word!  
Sonic Youth (clockwise,  
from top left, Steve Shelley,  
Lee Ranaldo, Kim Gordon  
and Thurston Moore),  
Rosemont, Illinois, 1991.



learning by doing. There was this adobe house and we dyed fabric and made fringing for shawls and ground corn. I was very coordinated as a kid, kind of a tomboy. I think playing music to me... I liked the visceral physicality of it. Moving through space."

The space she's moving through now, however, is shaped by the "histrionic R&B" coming through the lobby speakers. "This music that we're listening to right now, I hate it," she says. But she adds, "Music that might seem really blank to me maybe serves a purpose. I just notice, like, on Spotify they have all these playlists that have the word 'chill' in it – 'chilled-out work vibes', 'after-work vibes', 'chilled-out weekend vibes'." It's hard to imagine Gordon chilling out anywhere, but she doesn't only listen to boundary-breaking avant-garde music at home. She mentions Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk* more than you might expect. She also namechecks Rihanna, Beyoncé and Cardi B – "there's a kind of punk rock attitude that's inspiring."

She says she can't indulge in speculation about whether the music industry has become a better place for female artists, though, "when you look at the government and it's all white men at the top making bad decisions and destroying the world for everyone. I want to be

**"It's ridiculous to call me the Godmother Of Grunge. Sonic Youth weren't even a grunge band. And grunge was almost a made-up word by the secretary at Sub Pop."**

hopeful and there's some amazing women who are in Congress and in the Senate and I think that's really inspiring and hopeful."

Sometimes, though, she just wants to turn the news off. "I have to keep some of it out. It can make you sick."

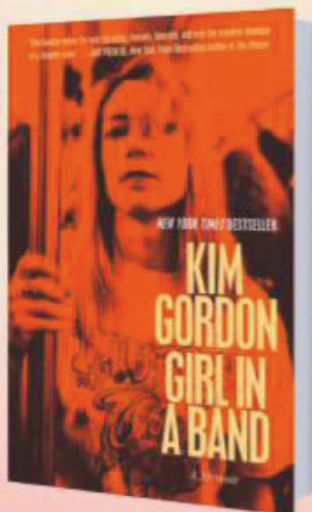
GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK



# Still Yr Idol: Kim Gordon's Key Cultural Moments

## Tunic (Song For Karen)

Karen Carpenter (below) died from complications of anorexia in 1983, aged just 32, and on this uncanny song from 1990's *Goo*, Gordon inhabits her troubled mind. In a feminist act of reclamation that made Generation X re-evaluate the easy-listening superstar, Gordon adds her to the rock pantheon, playing drums in heaven with Elvis and Janis Joplin.



## Girl In A Band

Named after the dreariest of all interview questions, "What's it like to be a girl in a band?" – Gordon's 2015 memoir laid out the circumstances of her divorce in searing detail. Yet it was also an illuminating cultural history of Sonic Youth and their distinctive times, a brilliant companion to Patti Smith's *Just Kids* and Tracey Thorn's *Bedsit Disco Queen*.

## X-Girl

The label Kim Gordon ran with Daisy Von Furth aimed to provide "fitted pieces that would flatter all body types", creating an influential new '90s aesthetic away from grunge's baggy plaid. It confirmed Gordon's status as a style icon and her realisation around the time of *Daydream Nation* that she wanted to "look more girl", redefining rock'n'roll's notions of "cool".



## Swimsuit Issue

"Don't touch my breast/ I'm just working at my desk," sang Gordon on this powerful pre-#MeToo reckoning from 1992's *Dirty* about an employee of their own record label sent to therapy after sexually harassing co-workers. It ends with a list of models from the 1992 *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue*. See also: *Daydream Nation's Kissability*.

## Kool Thing

Sonic Youth shared a studio with Public Enemy during the recording of their 1988 album *Daydream Nation* and the two bands connected: "I think Chuck D [below] maybe saw a similarity in the density of the music," says Gordon. He appeared on this single from 1990's *Goo*, an example of '90s genre-cross pollination inspired by an awkward interview Gordon had carried out with LL Cool J.



Two days later, Gordon is sitting in a Georgian boutique hotel in Clerkenwell, occupying a room that seems more appropriate for a visiting 18th-century magistrate than a modern musician. "They bring you porridge," she laughs, "it's so English." Yet if she seems more relaxed, it's this promotional aspect of her work that she sees as her only real compromise. "After doing that for so many years, you realise people perceive you a certain way – it is a little bit of baggage that's almost like catching a glimpse of a shadow that you didn't know you had. Sonic Youth was never so famous that we couldn't move around and do what we wanted, it wasn't a big deal. We didn't really think of ourselves as famous. But for my daughter [*Coco, born in 1994*] it was harder, because she had that awareness of people being interested in us, like people at school. Her natural mechanism was to shut those people up, sort of a self-protecting thing. That's when I actually first started thinking about it more."

Type the words "Godmother Of Grunge" into Google, for example, and Gordon's is the name that comes up. "I think it's ridiculous," she says emphatically. "We weren't even a grunge band. And grunge was almost a made-up word by the secretary at Sub Pop. We were friends with those bands and we toured with them but... it's just kind of a catch-all phrase. It just doesn't really give anyone any

information. I don't know what that means. 'Godmother'? That means I'm supposed to deliver them to Jesus Christ, which is a funny thought."

Yet Gordon does inspire a kind of hushed, holy reverence – a living, breathing role model who might start to beatify round the edges if she wasn't in constant motion. She not only reshaped the space occupied by a girl in a band – she reshaped it for anyone aiming to perform with any degree of integrity, anyone hoping to catch one fifth of the power of her hellish Los Angeles noir *The Sprawl*, for example, or one 10th of the killer insouciance she displayed in the video for Ciccone Youth's *Addicted To Love*, Sonic Youth's side-project cover of Robert Palmer's sleazy classic filmed in a department store karaoke booth for \$25.

She was a protective friend to Kurt Cobain, who put Sonic Youth's 1989 double LP *Daydream Nation* on his list of his 50 greatest albums; Courtney Love asked her to produce Hole's 1991 debut *Pretty On The Inside*. She was also a role model for riot grrrl, a position amplified by the touching video for *Bull In The Heather*, from 1994's *Experimental Jet Set, Trash And No Star*. Four months pregnant with Coco and "not feeling so great", Gordon decided to outsource the performance element. At first, she wanted to involve her beloved New York Knicks, but then she hit upon the idea of inviting Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill to dance about the band as they played, literally getting under their feet, a punk upstart causing havoc. Bikini Kill, like most riot grrrls at the time, were then operating a media blackout, >>





**The circle game: Gordon at her *She Bites Her Tender Mind* exhibition, IMMA, Dublin, 2019.**

alarmed by the prospect that their cause would be distorted under the media's glare. "I thought of her because I admired her so much and I just had this weird idea that it was a way for her to creep into the mainstream via MTV. It was hard for her – it was a big decision and she probably got a bit of flak for it, so it was a brave decision. I was a huge admirer but it wasn't part of my generation. It was almost like her giving us support too."

What do you think people wanted you to say when they asked you the "What's it like to be a girl in a band?" question? Did they want you to say how terrible it was, how miserable you were?

"I don't know. I'm not sure what they were after. Saying, 'What's it like being a boy in a band?' – no one would ever say that because that's normal. There's partly maybe a sincere interest to know but it's just insulting because you're a person and your sexuality is a part of you that it doesn't totally define... it's almost a question you can't answer – like 'What's it like to be a *girl*?'" She smiles. "I guess when I first started writing, I was interested in writing about men and music, this sort of homoerotic side of it, a place where men were allowed to be more emotional and be more like a girl. So I would say you have to look at men and music to maybe figure out what it's like to be a girl in a band."

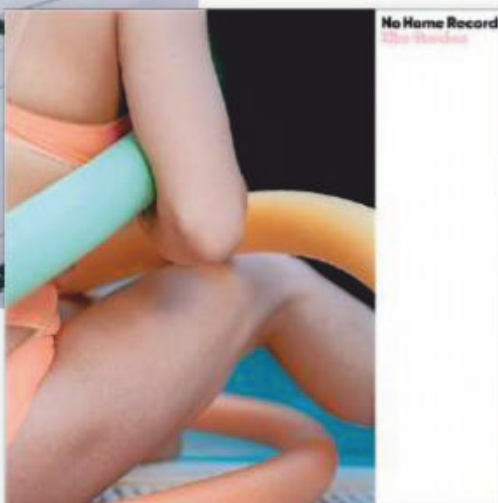
W

ith their recent album, *The Center Won't Hold*, Sleater-Kinney explicitly addressed what it means to be older, female, to occupy space and demand recognition. It's a question that comes up tangentially as Gordon discusses her past work in the world of fashion. In 1994, she co-launched cult label X-Girl, its A-line skirts and fitted shirts streamlining the '90s grunge aesthetic. In 2009, she created the short-lived Mirror/Dash to meet a "need for clothes for cool moms", and she collaborated with & Other

Stories in 2017. Gordon ponders the creeping expectation that at some stage in their lives – maybe if they have kids, or hit a certain age – women should see fashion as a frivolous distraction, turn their backs on it, quietly obliterate that visual projection of themselves.

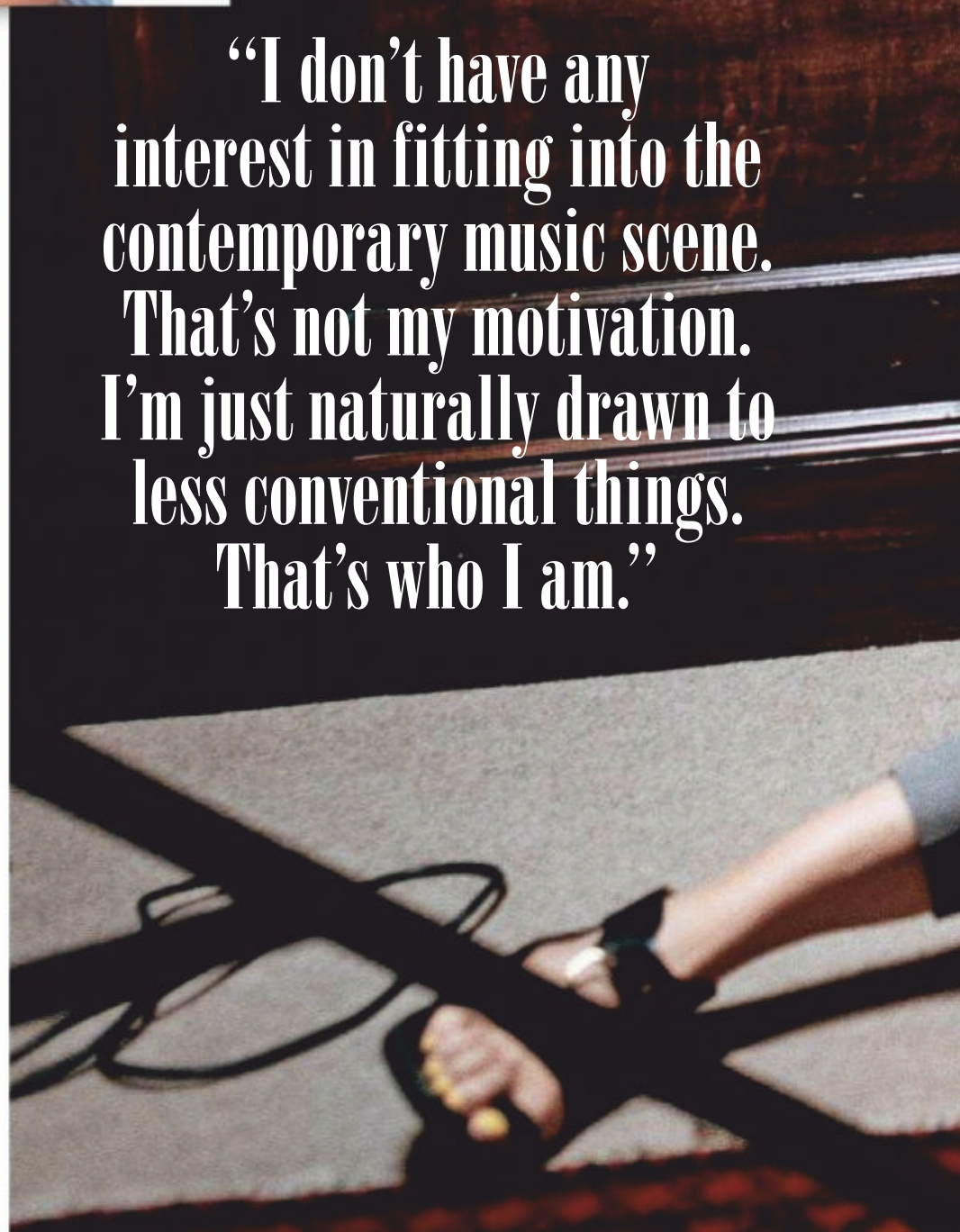
"I can see that, but you don't have to do that," Gordon says, wearing a sharp white blouse, black studded sandals, fabulous yellow nail varnish, perfect hair. "It's weird. I can only think of my mother, who would literally be lying in the hospital and want to put lipstick on at least. She bought her clothes from thrift stores – Beverly Hills thrift stores – but she was very concerned about the way she looked and putting outfits together. I think it's just part of one's personality that you want to retain. I think that is a challenge in growing older. You don't want to look like you're trying to dress like a 30-year-old but you also don't want to not feel like yourself. But I remember thinking to myself, 'Why is my mom so interested? Why is she showing so much vanity?' But, you know, she was a beautiful woman who didn't realise she was beautiful. No one really ever told her and I think that was something that she probably always struggled with. And she probably passed down to me."

Yes she says, there's a problem with fashion – the waste, the money, the way it's "an engine of capitalism" – but clothes, she says, "are a language and people read you. It's kind of an interesting way to communicate." She reaches for her phone to look up the title of an Émile Zola short story about a department store, an analysis of the double-edged quest



**"Anyone spare a chair?": Kim Gordon takes it easy amidst her hyperactive album promotion/art exhibition/gig schedule; (left) Gordon's forthcoming debut solo album, *No Home Record*.**

**"I don't have any interest in fitting into the contemporary music scene. That's not my motivation. I'm just naturally drawn to less conventional things. That's who I am."**





for fashion, for novelty. It's called, she says, The Ladies' Paradise. Just then Gordon's press officer appears punctually to wrap up the interview and Q, at the end of a question, stops. Very obedient.

"Aren't we all?" Gordon says, and smiles.

But of course, she's not. Gordon isn't a flash "rebellious" rule-breaker – she doesn't need to broadcast the boundaries she's crossed, the limits she's exceeded. She just does what she needs and wants to do, and she does it brilliantly.

At Cafe Oto, the Body/Head show once again stands as a remarkable testament not only to her creative skill, but her undimmed conviction, her fierce self-possession. Against monumental slo-mo frames from Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye*, Gordon, wearing metallic leather shorts, hair flying around her face like a plasma ball, leans over and over into the immense, emotionally complex noise she and Nace create together.

"I don't have any interest in fitting into the contemporary music scene," she said earlier. "That's not my motivation. I'm just naturally drawn to less conventional things. That's who I am." Up onstage, she lifts her guitar above her head and tears up the air around her. Moving through space, claiming it as her own. **Q**







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I'M NOT ACTUALLY  
IN THE BAND

# I'M NOT ACTUALLY IN THE BAND

Touring musicians are an essential piece of the puzzle in the live sound of your favourite artists. It's a life of embedding yourself into someone else's world and always remembering that, although you're in the band, you're also not. Five key secret ingredients tell us about the life of a "road player".



**ARTIST:** STORMZY  
**NAME:** DJ TIINY  
**ROLE:** DJ

Meet the grime superstar's right-hand man.

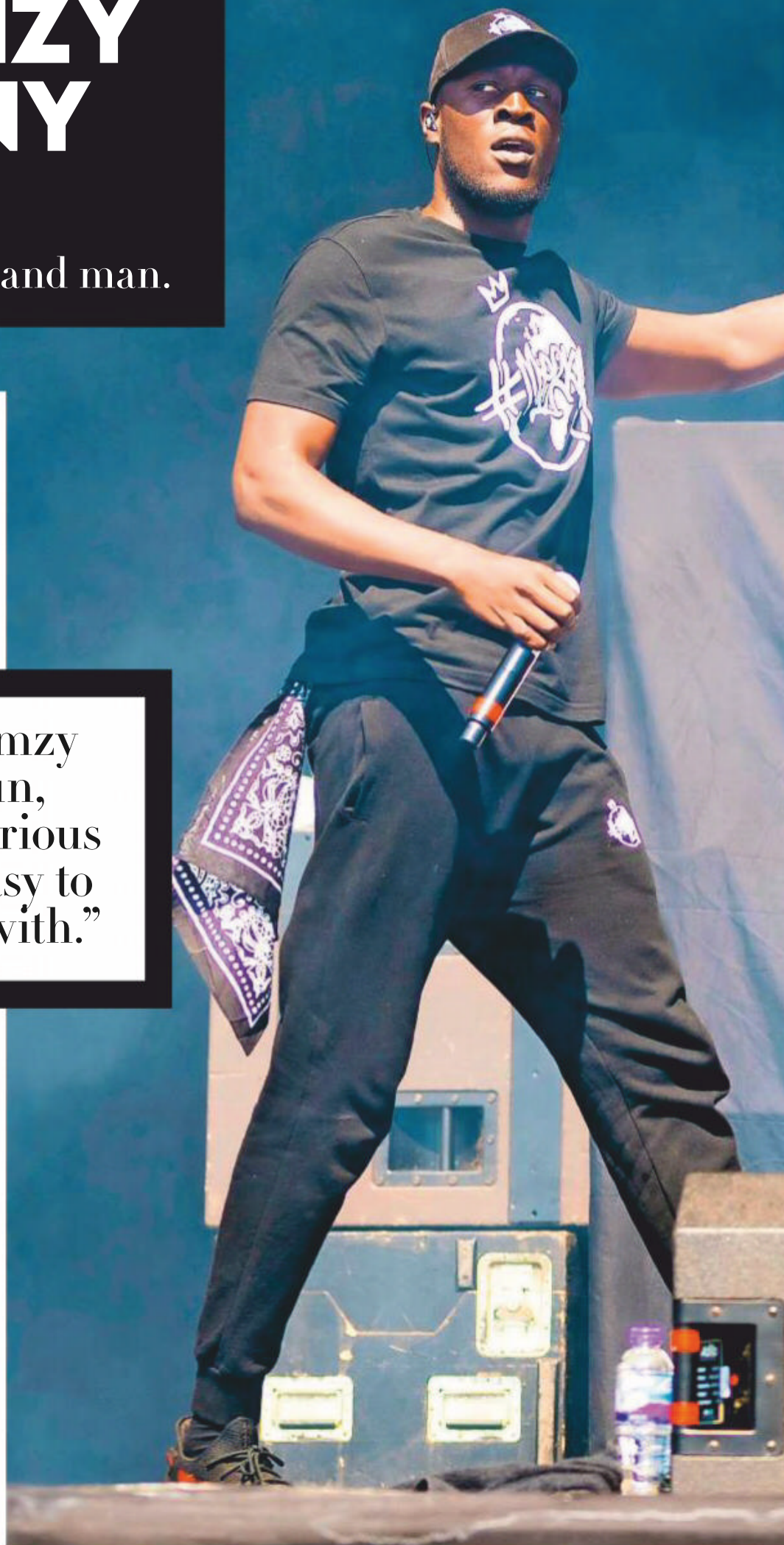
**F**runk Boakye-Yiadom was 14 when an older friend lost interest in his DJing hobby and handed down a set of decks to the youngster. He was 19 when, performing as DJ Tiiny in his native South London, local up-and-coming rapper Stormzy asked him to be his official DJ, and then 23 when he appeared as the now-grime superstar's right-hand man during this year's momentous Glastonbury headlining slot. "We smashed it, the band, the singers, the choir, it was crazy," says Boakye-Yiadom.

From the moment he received the second-hand equipment, Boakye-Yiadom was aiming for the top. "My plan at the time was to be a household name DJ," he says, in the same nonchalant manner that someone might plan

"Stormzy is fun, very serious and easy to work with."



Small wonder: DJ Tiiny, aka Frank Boakye-Yiadom, on the mic with Stormzy.



what they're having for dinner. "That was my main thing, to be a household name and very big and do main sets on my own that would make people happy every time I go out and play."

Over the next few years, he put his masterplan into action, performing at various club nights and venues in South London. It was at a summer rave in the Old Kent Road area when Stormzy first got to witness Tiiny's DJing skills. "I'd known him just from being in the area, coming to parties and stuff like that," Boakye-Yiadom recalls. "He's a little bit older than me, I was one of the youngers compared to his age group. We did the same rave, and the next day he called me."

For Boakye-Yiadom, it signalled the chance to start a new chapter



**All hands on decks:  
DJ Tiiny (right) with  
Stormzy at TRNSMT  
Festival, Glasgow, 2017.**



in his fledgling career, but even someone as ambitious as him couldn't have foreseen Stormzy's meteoric rise to become one of the country's biggest stars. There might have been a hint when, almost immediately after they got together, the pair were invited to appear on *Later...* With Jools Holland, their chemistry already apparent as Stormzy formidably rolled his way through single *Not That Deep*. But DJ Tiiny never felt like he'd been thrown into the deep end. "From that happening, I knew this would be something that I could easily adjust to and get the hang of and be the best in that."

As a kid, Boayke-Yiadom used to watch videos of old MCs, rappers and grime artists, soaking up how their DJs operated. "I always knew there was a chance I could become just like that if there was the artist and if I worked hard enough. I expected it but I didn't know how it would happen."

That self-confidence paid off when it came to this year's Glastonbury. As he sat in the dressing room waiting to take to the stage, a calm came over Boayke-Yiadom during the build-up. "I was just readying and preparing myself for a great historic moment," he

says. "I wanted to be well-behaved cos normally I'm very jumpy and energetic and excited. I thought, 'Let me be well-behaved, remain calm and humble and then prepare myself to smash it.'"

He says the feeling of tranquillity emanated down from the main man. "Stormzy was very calm," he states. "Reserved is the word. Stormzy is fun, very serious and easy to work with." The huge production saw DJ Tiiny placed behind a huge industrial grid of screens and lights, but he says he was as hyped-up as he usually is. "People couldn't see me, but I could see them," he says. "I still had the same energetic thing about me even though that was there. It made more of an impact cos the production was making the show even crazier." Afterwards, he says, was "all vibes, congratulating and stuff like that."

Alongside his work with Stormzy, he also has a show on Capital Xtra, mixes and DJ showcases on SoundCloud and an upcoming project titled *Tiiny Talks*, which will include conversations with artists, DJs and influencers. It's all down to a set of decks his friend no longer wanted. From there, DJ Tiiny's big-thinking approach to life has paid off. *NIAL DOHERTY*



**ARTIST: INTERPOL**  
**NAMES: BRAD TRUAX**  
**& BRANDON CURTIS**  
**ROLES: BASSIST &**  
**KEYBOARDIST**

The duo who helped the New York trio pull through their most testing phase.



Access most areas: Interpol (from left, Brad Truax, Paul Banks, Daniel Kessler and Brandon Curtis), Roskilde Festival Denmark, 2018.

**T**he noughties were a decade in which Interpol became one of the world's biggest cult rock bands but the next one began with a period of flux. Founding member, bassist and keyboardist Carlos Dengler had departed in 2010. His replacement, David Pajo, had lasted less than 12 months. They were in between record labels and searching for new management. "They had a rough year in 2011," says touring bassist Brad Truax. "My mindset was, 'Let's try to make this fun at least – these guys deserve to have some fun at this point!'"

Truax was tour managing veteran British folk artist Bert Jansch when he had a missed call from his old friend Daniel Kessler, Interpol's guitarist. The pair had often crossed paths in New York in the late '90s, when Kessler worked at Jetset Records and Truax's band Home were signed to the label. But they'd lost touch over the previous 10 years. "That's strange, why's Daniel trying to get in touch with me?" thought Truax to himself. "Maybe he wants to send someone in the band to rehab or something and wants some professional advice," was one possibility he mulled over. But he didn't call him back. He was too busy driving Bert Jansch around. Then Kessler emailed him. Then Kessler called him again, leaving a message: "Please call me back." "Finally, I called him back," recalls Truax, in his laid-back drawl, "and he popped the question: 'Could I play bass for Interpol?'"

Truax was taken aback. He hadn't followed Interpol's career since their debut *Turn On The Bright Lights*, and they'd released three more LPs since then. But the band had a European tour booked. They needed a bassist. Truax contemplated it for a day. "I called back and said, 'I'd be interested.' Then I had a crash course of the Interpol discography."

He spent a month in his apartment "living and breathing Interpol bass lines" and says he became a better musician in that period than he could have taught himself in five years. "I learned everything, note for note, and in 30 days of pulling my hair out, as much as it was challenging, by taking my ego out of it, I became a way better musician."

It wasn't just the musicianship he had to master. There was also the band's sartorial elegance to get to grips with too. Long-haired Truax was used to being the sort of person who wore the same thing onstage as he wore to the supermarket. Now he had to get suited up. His debut show in Hamburg was the first time he'd worn a suit onstage. "It was, 'OK, I've gotta not fuck up these 20 songs we're playing', but I had the discomfort of a stiff suit I'm wearing for the first time."

He got used to it, and by the time he was asked back in 2014 for the tour to accompany Interpol's *El Pintor* album, he was one of the gang. "I felt a little bit more loose to be myself. I'd remained friends



Suited and re-booted: Truax (left) and Curtis (right) learn to blend in.





I'M NOT ACTUALLY  
IN THE BAND



“My mindset was, ‘Let’s try to make this fun at least – these guys deserve to have some fun at this point!’” **Brad Truax**

with all of them when we had a break from touring.”

The year before Truax joined the band, Dengler’s departure had also created an opening for a keyboardist. As a founding member of New York space-rockers Secret Machines, Brandon Curtis knew Interpol, both musically and personally. His own band were beginning to wind down when Interpol singer Paul Banks called to ask if he was interested. “In a weird way, it was attractive to me in the sense that I could just be a music worker and play without a lot of the extra stuff and the pressure,” says Curtis. “The more I thought about it, it just seemed like a good idea.”

Curtis has an obsessive personality when it comes to music. In Secret Machines, that would manifest itself in his micromanaging of every detail and involvement in every piece of decision-making. Becoming a “road player” with Interpol, he had to learn how to redirect it. “I still have that same kind of dedicated personality, I didn’t switch it off,” he says. “It’s just, ‘How do I make this work for them, how do I put that to the best use for the music and dynamic between the guys in the band?’ It’s made me grow quite a bit. It’s like learning another language.”

It took time for Curtis to become familiar with his new situation. The first Interpol tour he embarked on, there were 25 songs to learn,

sing and play. “The thing that became apparent to me is the high standard they hold themselves to. You don’t want to be the weak link in that situation.”

If Curtis were to give someone advice about being a touring musician, he’d tell them to be able to hear feedback, to understand that it’s someone else’s baby and their handing

control over to a new person is close to traumatic. “You have to earn a lot of trust and it takes a long time for them to believe that you have their best interest at heart,” he says.

Curtis says he still feels like the new guy, but he and Truax have now been mainstays in the live band for almost a decade, a period that could be defined as Interpol’s second wave. In between tours, both have projects away from the New Yorkers. Curtis is readying a new Secret Machines record as well as continuing work on his Cosmicide outfit. Alongside his own projects Home and Soldiers Of Fortune, Truax has used breaks to play bass with both Black Mountain and Spiritualized. But Interpol is the one he keeps coming back to.

“I am forever grateful for the experiences, taking your ego and personality out of the equation and learning music,” he says. He should consider himself lucky that Daniel Kessler is such a persistent character in the face of unreturned phone calls. Ten years in, the pair have earned their trust. **NIALL DOHERTY**



I'M NOT ACTUALLY  
IN THE BAND

A design for live:  
Nick Nasmyth  
(far left) onstage  
with the Manic  
Street Preachers,  
Leicester, 2014.

**ARTIST:** MANIC STREET  
PREACHERS  
**NAME:** NICK NASMYTH  
**ROLE:** KEYBOARDIST

The man who witnessed the Manics' mainstream rise from the inside.

**M**anic Street Preachers were struggling to overcome the trauma of Richey Edwards's disappearance when Nick Nasmyth was employed on keyboards. It was 1996 and the band had a new record titled *Everything Must Go* completed and ready for release. There wasn't time for Nasmyth to quietly bed in. His debut was performing *A Design*

For Life on Chris Evans's primetime Friday night show *TFI Friday*, one of the biggest shows on TV at the time, and then he was asked to join them for two huge support shows with Oasis at Manchester's Maine Road. He discovered afterwards that it was his audition, and he'd passed. "Before we did Maine Road, we did a night at the Hacienda and the band were pretty upset by playing without Richey," he recalls. "I didn't think they would carry on. We did the Maine Road thing and at the end of the two nights, someone said to me, 'Oh, by the way, you've got the gig.' But I will admit it was quite nerve-wracking."

The Manics, of course, did carry on. *Everything Must Go* turned them into one of the UK's biggest bands and, over the next few years, Nasmyth got to witness their heady successes from the inside. "The Millennium Stadium on New Year's Eve in 1999 was fantastic, as was going to Cuba and meeting Fidel Castro, that was a big one. As an ex-band member of other bands, it was incredible to see what it was like to actually be fantastically successful. It was an amazing experience."

Nasmyth never meant to become a session musician. Who does? He'd played for numerous bands and was in a power trio

called *Thirteen Days* when he was asked to play keyboards for pop duo *Shampoo*.

"A friend of mine said, 'Do you want to come to Japan? You get paid.' They had the same management as the Manics. The rest is history, so to speak."

He says that there are certain rules if you're an extended member of a band's live set-up. "You've got to be quite amiable, never think you're in the band and be prepared for anything, musically. The temperament is about getting on with people. Respect the fact it's a job. Be yourself and be true to yourself – if you don't like the band, don't play with them." He still remembers a line about him in a review from a Manics show at the Royal Albert Hall in 1997, perhaps part of the reason why he says he never reads anything that is connected to him and isn't on social media. "It said, 'The keyboard player looked like he was serving drinks.' It was a bad one."

The potential spotlight didn't dissuade him from making a move into pop in 2005, though. He departed the Manics to record an album with Melanie C, which led to playing on the Spice Girls' reunion tour in 2007. The Manics were big, but this was another level up. "It was totally different," he laughs. "Private jets are great!"

Nasmyth rejoined the Welsh trio in 2013 and the man nicknamed "The Lord" by the Manics crew says it felt like he'd never left. "There was obviously quite a lot of piss-taking on their part," he says. "'Oh, have a nice time?', that sort of thing."

Things could have taken an alternative path for Nasmyth if his mum had passed on messages from Dexys and Talk Talk enquiring about his services. "My whole career would've started 10 years earlier, but you can't look back. It worked out really well." Next, he's working with Jimmy Somerville on a future project and also heading to Japan with the Manics for two shows. He respects the fact that it's a job, but that doesn't mean Nick Nasmyth hasn't been having the time of his life on the quiet. *NIAL DOHERTY*

From despair to  
here: Nasmyth,  
aka "The Lord",  
Sheffield, 2019.





# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?



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**ARTIST:** ARCTIC MONKEYS  
**NAME:** TYLER PARKFORD  
**ROLE:** KEYBOARDIST

For one musician, going out to the pub with the Arctic Monkeys led to being *in* the Arctic Monkeys.

**T**he road to being a top-level gun-for-hire can require years of honing your chops, making studio connections, earning a reputation for versatility, punctuality and consummate professionalism. The best of the best. For Arctic Monkeys' touring keyboardist Tyler Parkford, the route was a little more leisurely. "Some people are seasoned session guys, they spend their lives working on it and that's their hustle, but I just fluked this," he laughs.

Parkford is also on the call-up list for former Tame Impala member Cameron Avery's band and glam-pop eccentrics Sparks ("that's a whole other story"), but his main gig is as a part of LA rock trio Mini Mansions – a group formed by Queens Of The Stone Age bassist Michael Shuman and session musician/engineer Zach Dawes. Keeping your own band going and on the road when all the members need to be at the beck and call of some of the biggest names in music understandably requires some military-level organisation. "It takes some delicate juggling," Parkford notes. "It's exhausting. It's not for everyone, but I love it."

It was through his bandmate's link to one-time Arctic Monkeys producer Josh Homme that Parkford found himself both playing on the band's last album and then subsequently sat centre-stage next to Alex Turner as they toured Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino.

"When a few of the Monkeys and Miles Kane

you *want* to play keys for them. That tour was the some of the most fun I've had," he remembers.

It was that spirit of friendly collaboration that led Turner to invite Parkford to the amorphous, instrument-swapping sessions for Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino and then to help the band recreate its sprawling, sci-fi lounge-rock sound live.

"At the end of the day, that's what it all boils down to. It's about personality more than skill," Parkford reckons. "I'm not saying I'm not skilled, but there's tons of classically-trained keyboardists who could probably slay it but I don't know if they'd have the right personality."

Parkford tries to find an appropriate metaphor to describe how he fits into the Arctic Monkeys' close-knit set-up. "It's like jumping into someone's living room. You're appreciative of being in the living room, but it takes a while to find the role the living room needs." He tries again: "They cook in a certain way and I thoroughly enjoyed being the wild card... Basically, I'm the goofy new guy."

He now feels like part of the firm, or furniture, so if Alex Turner ever asked Parkford to drop all of his other musical projects to become a full-time Monkey, what would he say?

"I'd probably say 'Sure'. But then I'd never tell them that whenever we had time off I was touring in Mini Mansions. I'd be secretive, they wouldn't have to know. I could work that..."

Given his capacity for plate-spinning, you're inclined to believe him. **CHRIS CATCHPOLE**

"It's about  
personality  
more than  
skill."

"I'm the goofy new guy": Tyler Parkford (centre) with Arctic Monkeys' Matt Helders and Alex Turner, Seattle, 2018.





JOAN SHELLEY

I won't take Manhattan:  
Joan Shelley, New York  
City, 3 August, 2019.







# A Country Mouse In The Big Apple

She never really felt comfortable in a city, so **Joan Shelley** moved to the Kentucky countryside, a place that reflects her music's heady atmosphere. Somewhere still, stately, pastoral. **Leonie Cooper** lures Shelley to Manhattan to hear how learning to love her roots was the greatest love of all.

Photography: **Colin Lane**



# Three years ago,

Going underground:  
Joan Shelley hits the  
New York subway,  
August, 2019.

Joan Shelley moved 30 miles outside of Louisville, the largest city in her home state of Kentucky, to a “sweet little house on a tree farm” in the depths of the countryside. Sweet it might have been, but it was also falling apart.

“We tried to repair it and took back the walls but there were vines growing up in it and termites had eaten everything,” she explains. “You could put your arm through these giant beams.” What followed was some serious structural rejigging, a lot of tender loving care and brand new walls.

The house has since become the trad-inspired Americana singer-songwriter’s sanctuary; an internet-free zone a mile off the main road with her ’96 Dodge Ram truck parked by the screened-in porch – those Kentucky bugs can be killer – and a couch where she writes, sips bucketloads of black tea and records her lo-fi demos.

“When I listen back to them, there are birds in everything,” she says with a contented smile. Kind of like white noise? “More like... green noise.”

She’s also always accompanied by Dwight Lightning, the fluffy dog she found nine years ago when leaving a bar after celebrating her birthday. A fuzzy “bear rug” of a thing, he’ll often snuggle up by the piano pedals when she’s trying to write inside the house. “But if it’s the banjo he’s long gone!” adds Shelley, chuckling.

For someone whose music is so deeply ingrained with a sense of the outdoors and who writes lyrics that regularly draw upon the glory of nature, her current arrangement makes perfect sense.

“It’s dark at night, it’s quiet at night,” she says of the remote getaway she calls home,

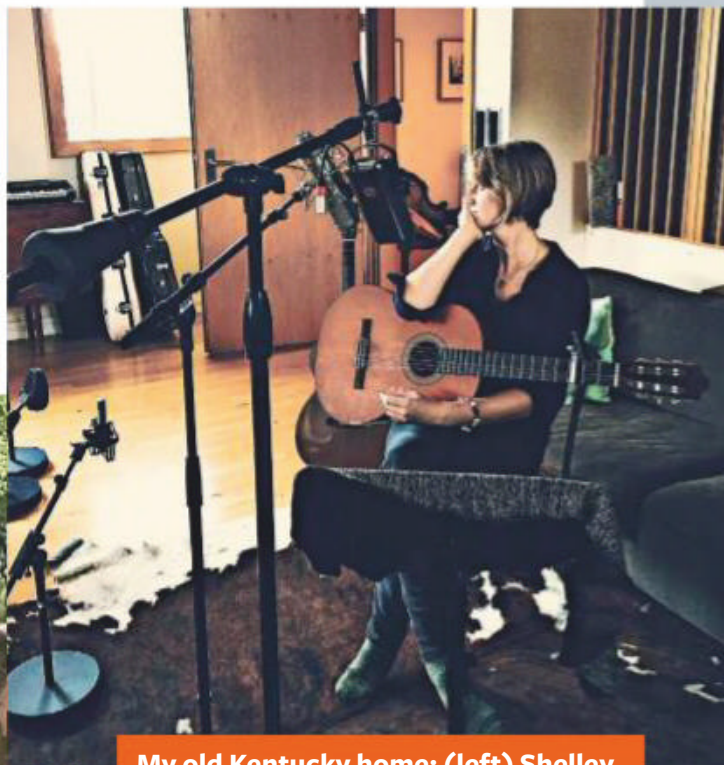
her voice full of a gentle kind of glee. “A lot of people come from cities and can’t deal with that void, but I prefer to live in a tree than on a city block.”

It’s ironic, then, that we meet on perhaps the biggest city block of them all: Manhattan. It’s one of those sticky city summer days where everywhere is loud, everyone is sweaty and everything else is just a bit icky. Desperately seeking silence, it’s decided that we’ll talk in a hotel room, the quietest place in a 10-block radius, where the only interruption comes from the rattle of an aged air-con unit working overtime. Settling into a small corner sofa with a mug of herbal tea in hand, Shelley is quick to lay out her thoughts on New York.

“I love the art and what people produce here but then I go and visit the friends, the artists who made that stuff and think, ‘This place is crushing your soul!’” she sighs. “You have to work your tail off just be alive here.”

Although many of her contemporaries felt the need to move to New York, LA or Nashville to pursue their careers, Shelley has never wanted to follow in their footsteps.

Five albums into her own journey – and having just released *Like The River Loves The Sea*, which is in no uncertain terms her finest yet – it seems more unlikely than ever



My old Kentucky home: (left) Shelley sofa surfs with her dog Dwight Lightning; (above) working on her latest album in Reykavík, Iceland.





**“You can go into the woods and be relieved of some of your awful humanness. That’s kind of what I’m trying to do with music.”**

that she’ll be doing it now. Instead, her home is right by the Kentucky horse farm she grew up on.

It’s the place where she learned about the natural world and its brutality as well as its beauty.

“I saw horses born and all the gnarliness of that,” she recalls, matter-of-factly. “We had to bury animals and as a kid you don’t think that’s weird. You learn about death. My earliest memories are of cats being born and a young foal dying because it couldn’t nurse.”

In amongst those starkly illuminating experiences, a teenage Shelley picked up the guitar that her mother kept in the attic and taught herself to play using a chord chart stuck to the wall. Carving out a niche for herself in a sprawling family – she was raised alongside two step siblings, one half-brother and one brother (“It was not the Brady Bunch; it was very different. It was not easy”) – she quickly discovered that music was a way for her to express subtlety and nuance within such a large, chaotic household.

**T**hough her music now is deeply indebted to British folk as well as old-timey Kentucky sounds, also drawing upon the countrified likes of Gillian Welch and Neko Case, Shelley’s roots are less rootsy.

“I wasn’t really a kid who identified with music,” she explains. “For a while it was just regular stuff like Led Zeppelin and country radio. My first record was like, Ace Of Base!”

Her mother’s own interest in artists like Judy Collins was enough to put her off the giants of 1960s US folk revival to this day. “I don’t get that singing style. A lot of it was too saccharine.” It wasn’t until much later, when she came across the “more ballsy” British likes of Fairport Convention that she was able to open herself up to more traditional records. “When I found folk rock, I could then go to folk,” she explains.

“Folk rock is badass and when you take things away from it, it still is pretty badass.” >>





**“When can I go back home?”: Shelley braves New York just a little longer.**

With a degree in cultural anthropology from the University Of Georgia and a whole lot of spots at open-mic nights in Athens under her belt, she recorded her first album in Louisville in 2011. The melodies on *Ginko* are still gorgeous, feathery things, but their production took a more simplistic approach. “A lot of my friends loved this loud and dynamic stuff, like Slint and post-punk stuff coming out Louisville, these very dramatic rock sounds,” she explains of her sonic evolution from sledgehammer energy to more meditatively hushed.

“So I started out thinking, ‘This is how

up-and-coming artists – especially when compared to her experiences playing shows back home, where a sneer and single drinks token was often considered the height of hospitality for smaller touring acts.

“It was the first time I’d been treated with some kind of dignity,” she remembers. “Over there they give you a hotel and dinner, and that’s just not done in the US for starting musicians. It helped me think, ‘This is not just throwing your life away’, which is what the message is from society.”

*Electric Ursa* followed in 2014, her first for current label, the independent

**“Most people experience this thing, when you leave and see what you’ve taken for granted. You see the shape of your life and your home by not having that thing around.”**

you do it.’ But over time I’ve gotten more, ‘Well, this is how I do it.’”

It was in 2012 that Shelley decided to make a proper commitment to life as a musician, during a European tour with fellow Kentucky songwriter Daniel Martin Moore, with whom she released a joint album that same year. Playing shows across Ireland, England and Spain, she was pleasantly surprised at how they were regarded as a pair of young,

Philadelphia-based No Quarter, with *Over And Even* a year later, then her self-titled triumph in 2017. On *Like The River Loves The Sea*, as with the four before it, Joan Shelley’s deep attachment to all things ecological shines through.

She sings in tribute to the “fresh air and wind and waves” on the transcendent *Teal* while shady trees, flowers and fields pepper the dreamy, string-laden *High On The Mountain*.

“You can go into the woods and be relieved of some of your awful humanness,” explains Shelley of her cleansing, transformative brand of outdoorsy Americana. “That’s kind of what I’m trying to do with music. Remind us that we like to be in green.”

Upping sticks to a very different kind of wilderness, Shelley travelled to Iceland’s Greenhouse Studios in order to record *Like The River Loves The Sea*. For an album that seems so deeply attached to the fields, farms and flowing water of Kentucky, it seems counter-intuitive to run away from the very place that inspired her to make it, but Shelley disagrees.

“I think most people experience this thing, when you leave and see what you’ve taken for granted,” she explains. “You see the shape of your life and your home by not having that thing around.”

So when a friend who had been working

## Joan Shelley’s albums in her own words



### **Ginko** (2012)

“That’s very much an album of ocean songs. I don’t know why! I was younger and louder. I didn’t listen to folk music back then. That probably happened about when I met Nathan [Salsburg, guitarist] and started digging more.”



### **Electric Ursa** (2014)

“It’s a step into minimalism, but still working within the full band landscape. We started big and created a smaller sound by editing. There’s more banjo and fiddle, but it’s a spacious rhythm section, like Lambchop.”



### **Over And Even** (2015)

“This one sounds even smaller! Instead of having a big band and paring it down, we started with the tiny band of me and Nathan and added to that. I went for more solid songs, sturdy songs. Songs with a chorus!”



### **Joan Shelley** (2017)

“We recorded in Chicago with Jeff Tweedy. He just seemed so natural and human. I’d never worked with a producer producer and I didn’t ever want to, but he was just like, ‘No, let’s just make a record.’ He was a very welcoming person.”



### **Like The River Loves The Sea** (2019)

“Where we’d been working with more woody, warm tones before, this is still natural but it’s about the iridescence in nature. That’s what the string arrangements and pools of sound are about.”



in a recording studio in the suburbs of Reykjavík told her the place was going to be empty for a week and they could use it for free, Shelley and her guitarist Nathan Salsburg were on the first flight out of Louisville.

They were only there for six days and recording for five, so it was hardly a holiday, but Shelley managed to drink in a little of the local atmosphere with a visit to a geothermic river, complete with a six-pack of beers and the kind of bliss that suits her down to the ground: “We were just sat in it and there were mud pits bubbling in the distance and one sheep in the mist.”

On *Like The River Loves The Sea* you can clearly hear the earthy influences of British folkies like Anne Briggs and June Tabor, while *Cycle* seems to be an Appalachian revamp of Sandy Denny’s evergreen *Who Knows Where The Time Goes*. There’s also a touch of Linda Thompson, which makes sense, seeing as Shelley has supported her former partner

Richard Thompson on three separate tours. Last year she even sang Linda’s part on *A Heart Needs A Home* with the great British guitarist. “I was so shy, but I thought, ‘I’ll kick myself if I don’t ask and I’ll regret it forever!’” she remembers. “People at the merch table later were like, ‘You were so red!’ I thought, ‘Oh no, you’ve blown it!’”

But it was Lee Hazlewood’s swooning 1970 cult classic *Cowboy In Sweden* she really wanted to channel on her latest album. Shelley’s aim was to subtly step things up from her super-minimal 2017 release, which was produced by Jeff Tweedy of Wilco, who had long been a fan of Shelley’s work. Now she wanted to experiment and bring in a certain shimmer to reflect the natural psychedelics of nature.

“I wanted to make that more lush sound,” says Shelley of her decision to bring in a small string section and boost the feeling to something altogether more magical. “We were jokingly calling it *Cowgirl In Iceland*.” Sadly, that working title didn’t make the final cut. “I didn’t want to insult the cowboys and cowgirls of the world by pretending!”


An enchanting, pastoral piece that makes for a perfect companion to releases by Jessica Pratt, Julie Byrne and the new wave of hushed US folk from the past couple of

years, *Like The River Loves The Sea* also features vocals from Kentucky gent Will Oldham. The man also known as Bonnie “Prince” Billy adds his distinctive harmonies to two of the record’s prettiest tracks; the finger-picked *Coming Down For You* and undulating *The Fading*. The pair met at a house gathering in Louisville years ago, details of which are hazy now.

“It could have been an ugly sweater Christmas party... or maybe he was just dressed crazy,” Shelley pauses for a second and grins. “That’s also possible.”

They kept in touch and have collaborated a number of times, including on 2015’s acclaimed *Over And Even* and last year’s stark cover of *The Bridge*, Dolly Parton’s gothic 1968 song about the suicide of a young, pregnant woman. It was Oldham’s low-key brand of success that also made Shelley happy to stay in Kentucky to pursue her dreams.

“He’s doing this, it’s working for him,” she figured after they met. “You don’t have to be taking yourself to a big city. Just be from your place and see what’s around you.”

And who wouldn’t be content with their own country escape, with their faithful hound by their side and their beast of a truck in the drive, ready to go anywhere? Or, as Shelley has realised, nowhere at all, too. 

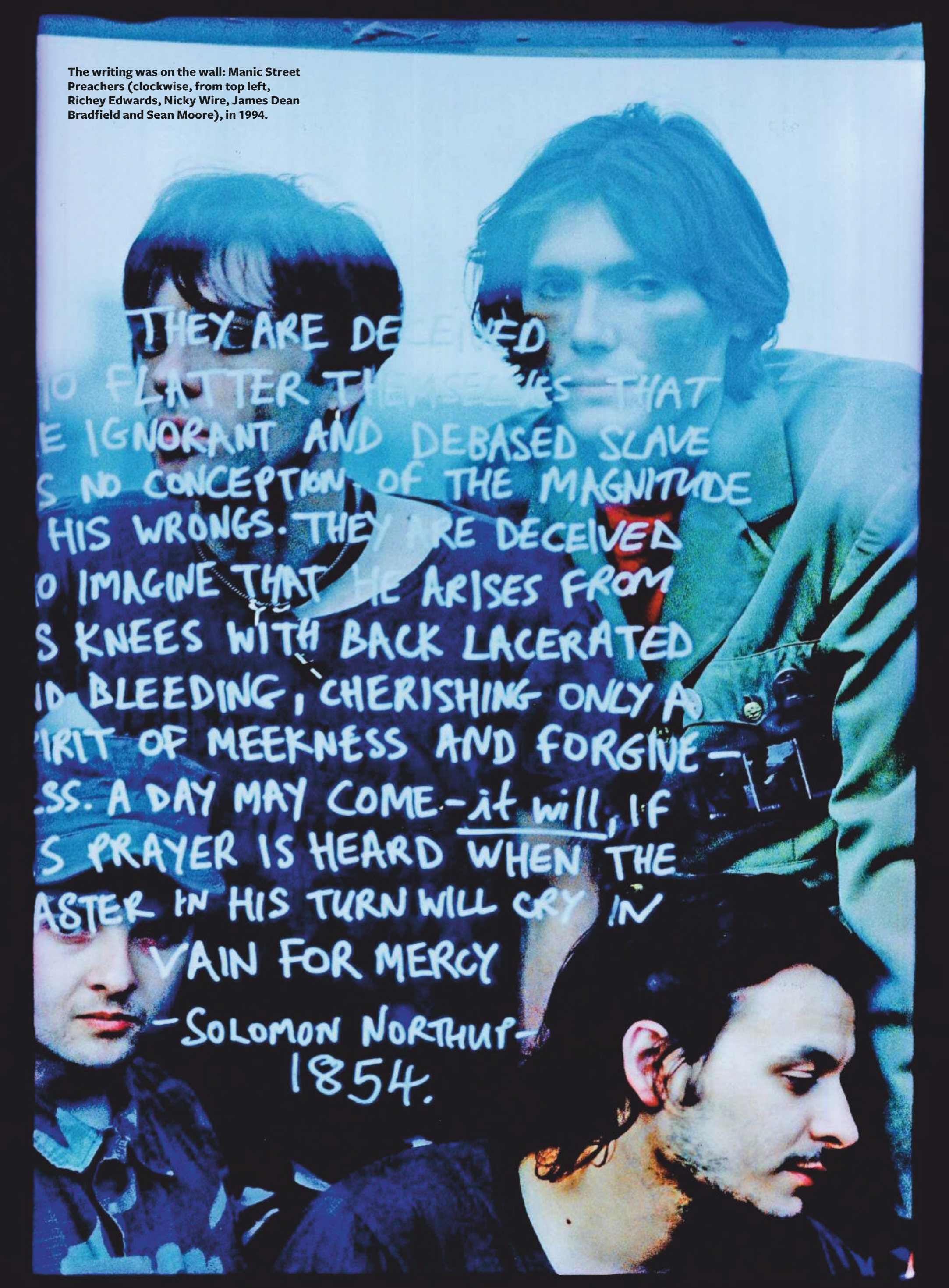
**Urban cowgirl: Joan Shelley with longtime collaborator, Nathan Salsburg, Barbican Centre, London, 2018.**



GETTY



The writing was on the wall: Manic Street Preachers (clockwise, from top left, Richey Edwards, Nicky Wire, James Dean Bradfield and Sean Moore), in 1994.



THEY ARE DECEIVED  
TO FLATTER THEMSELVES—THAT  
THE IGNORANT AND DEBASED SLAVE  
HAS NO CONCEPTION OF THE MAGNITUDE  
OF HIS WRONGS. THEY ARE DECEIVED  
TO IMAGINE THAT HE ARISES FROM  
ON HIS KNEES WITH BACK LACERATED  
AND BLEEDING, CHERISHING ONLY A  
SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS AND FORGIVENESS.  
A DAY MAY COME—it will, IF  
HIS PRAYER IS HEARD WHEN THE  
MASTER IN HIS TURN WILL CRY IN  
VAIN FOR MERCY  
—SOLOMON NORTHUP—  
1854.





CLASSIC ALBUM

# THE HOLY BIBLE

BY **MANIC STREET PREACHERS**

THE HOLY BIBLE  
MANIC STREET PREACHERS



1. YES  
2. IF WHITE AMERICA TOLD THE TRUTH FOR ONE DAY IT'S WORLD WOULD FALL APART  
3. OF WALKING ABORTION • 4. SHE IS SUFFERING • 5. ARCHIVES OF RAIN  
6. REVOL • 7. 41C 710 • 8. MAUSOLEUM • 9. FASTER • 10. THIS IS YESTERDAY  
11. DIE IN THE SUMMERTIME • 12. THE INTENSE HUMMING OF EVIL • 13. P.C.P.

By early 1994, Manic Street Preachers' opulent, provocative rock shtick seemed to have worn thin. Inspired, however, by lyricist Richey Edwards's sincerely bleak writing, the band carved out a brutal, career-saving new sound. **Keith Cameron** charts the creation of a harrowing masterpiece.





n 21 December, at the Astoria Theatre in London, at the end of the final night of a three-gig residency, James Dean Bradfield, Richey James Edwards, Sean Moore and Nicky Wire were giving themselves an early Christmas

present. The cost? £26,000. A bit steep, possibly, but considering the 12 months the Manic Street Preachers had been through, it felt justified.

Almost exactly a year earlier, Philip Hall, who co-managed the band with his brother Martin, died of cancer. In July, Richey Edwards, the band's co-lyricist and intellectual fulcrum, was admitted to the Priory psychiatric clinic, as the physical consequences of his mental illness spun out of control. In between these two traumatic moments, the band wrote and recorded a new album with a mindset that was pure Year Zero. Deeply dissatisfied with how their original grand ideals appeared to have already dwindled into just another middling rock career, the Manics' new record was primitive and raw where its two predecessors had been opulent and polished.

It offered the harrowing self-analysis of one individual, staring into his own personal abyss as a logical response to the wretched condition of the world. "Little people in little houses/Like maggots, small blind and worthless," Edwards wrote in the song Of

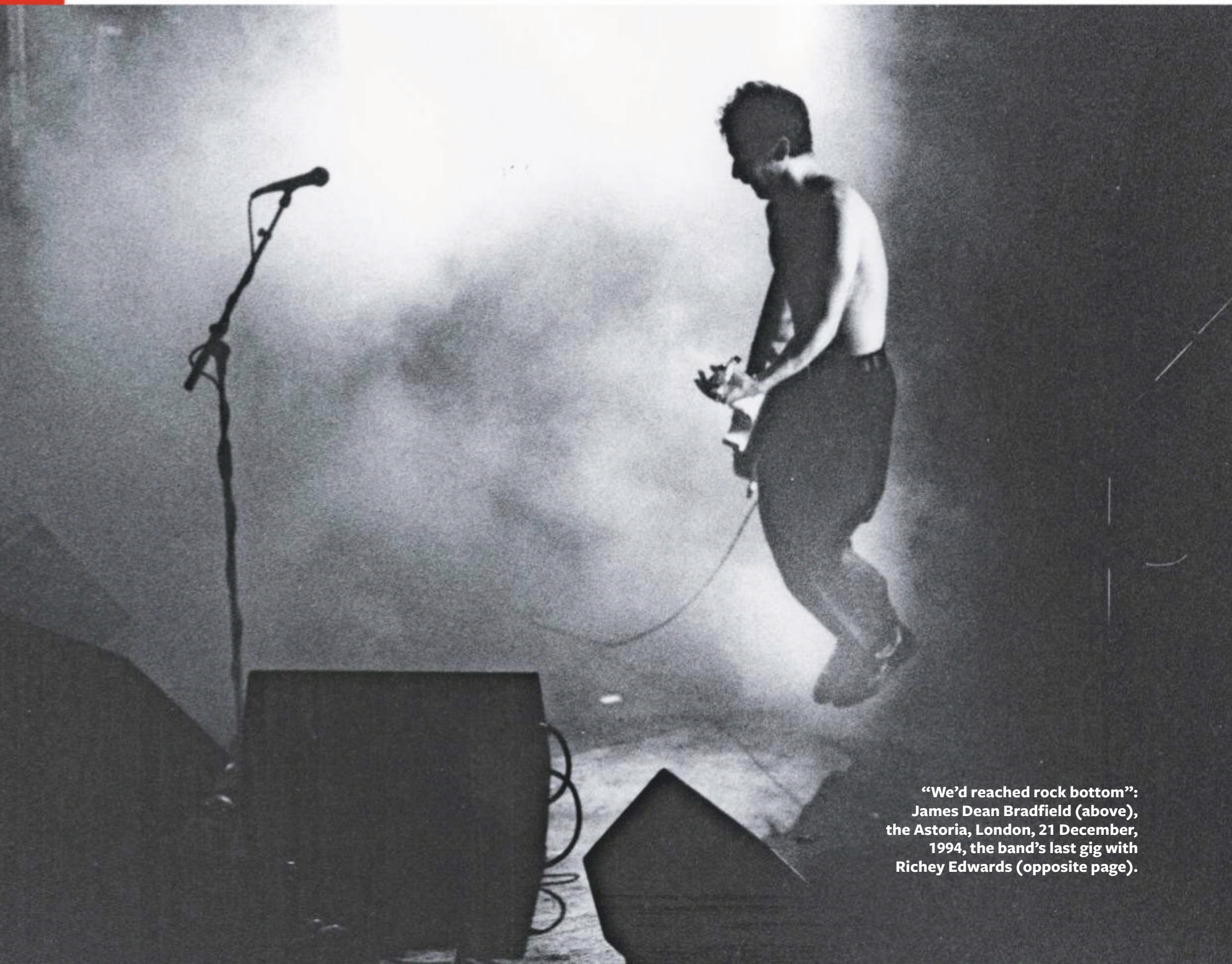
Walking Abortion. "Who's responsible?/ You fucking are."

This new album was called *The Holy Bible*.

The beginning of the end started with the guitars. Edwards first, slamming his Fender into the amplifier stack, then Bradfield and Wire joined in. After he'd finished with his own gear, Bradfield looked over at Edwards hacking away at what remained of his equipment and decided to help out. Then he noticed Wire hadn't quite managed to completely obliterate his bass guitar.

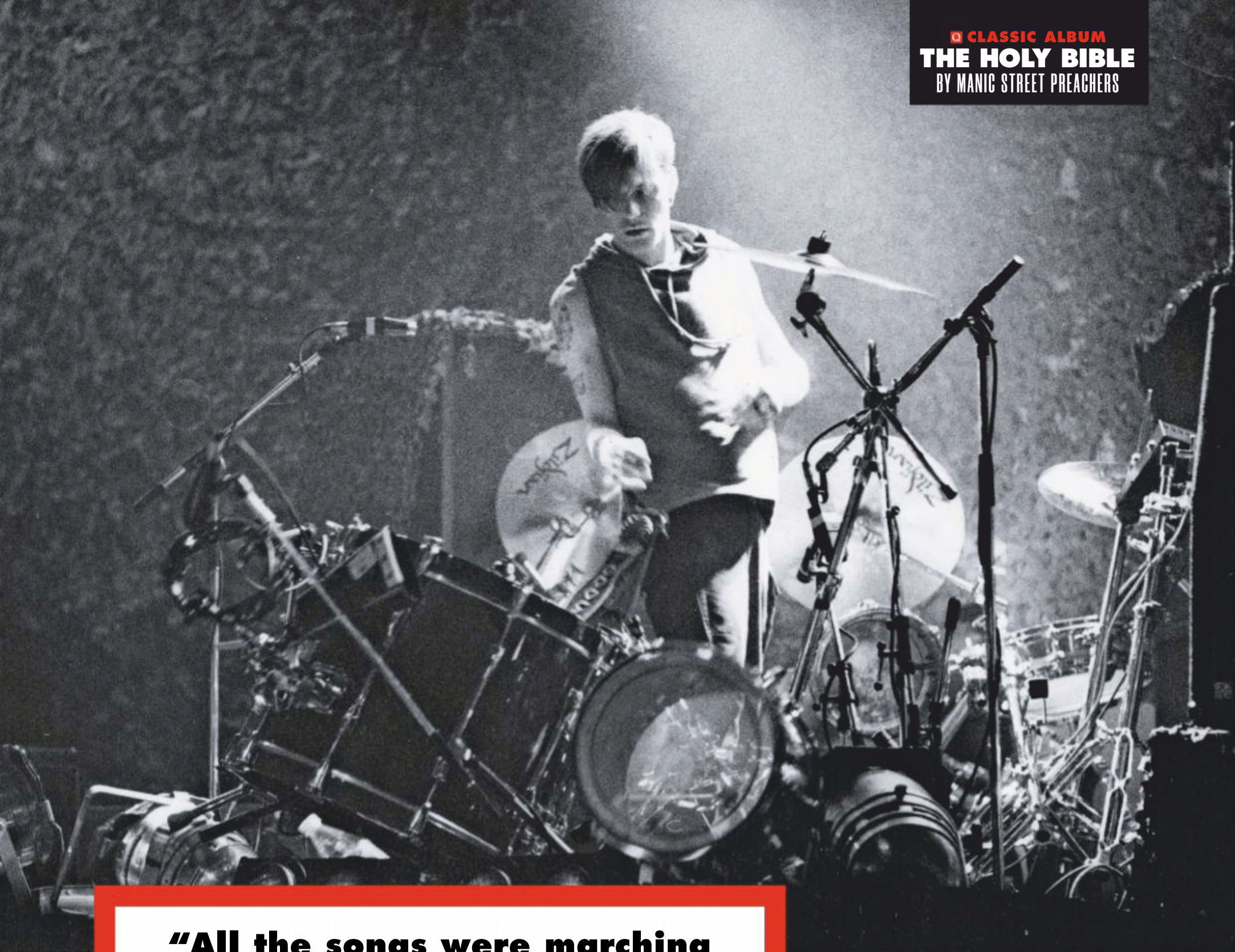
"I'll have some of that too," he thought. Then Bradfield turned around and saw the unthinkable: Sean Moore smashing his prized drums. After that, everything on the stage went.

The Manics had destroyed stuff before. As learned pop-art iconoclasts, it was in their blood. But not like this. Never everything. Never the lights. Never Sean's drums. This wasn't a pre-programmed rock'n'roll gesture. This was personal. This was the end of *The Holy Bible* – an album titled in acknowledgement of its definitive content. A last set of words.



**"We'd reached rock bottom":** James Dean Bradfield (above), the Astoria, London, 21 December, 1994, the band's last gig with Richey Edwards (opposite page).





**"All the songs were marching towards something, and it just became more aggressive. Straighter. Strychnined. Angular. Colder." James Dean Bradfield**

In an interview with Swedish television just three weeks before his final performance, Edwards stated: "I think that if a Holy Bible is true it should be about the way the world is." Six weeks later, Richey Edwards disappeared.



On 7 February, 1994, the Manics' record label Columbia released *Life Becoming A Landslide*, a fourth and final

attempt to wring some life from *Gold Against The Soul*, the band's patchy, often turgid second album recorded a year previously, at vast expense, in Oxfordshire's

luxurious Hook End Manor. The single flopped – its Number 36 chart placing was the Manics' lowest in three years – but its B-side offered a startling portent of the future. *Comfort Comes* was an oppressive blast of clipped-riff austerity, like the definitive post-punk band Wire's song *Our Swimmer* being forced through a corroded shower-head. Rock's routine cathartic tools, such as cymbals, were verboten. Compared to the lead track's overblown production and bombastically orchestrated melancholy, it sounded like the work of an entirely different band.

The Manics produced it themselves in their South Wales heartland. The aesthetic was deliberately gritty: for an engineer they chose novice Alex Silva, a member of Brith Gof, an avant-garde Welsh theatre company

who had previously collaborated with industrial noise troupe Test Dept. They recorded at the tiny £50-a-day Sound Space Studios, in a seedy locale near Cardiff's Brains Brewery.

"Pete, who owned the place, had this baseball bat," Bradfield later remembered, "because there were always people trying to break in, glue-sniffing, shagging against the door. He would come out with the bat: 'I do not want any fucking discharge on my door!' My memories of recording *Gold Against The Soul* were us being pretend rockers. I wanted that opulence to be got rid of. I wanted to feel like we felt at the start. We were only a couple of years down the line but I'd already felt that we'd lost it."

The lyrics to *Comfort Comes*, written entirely by Richey Edwards, pondered "the difference between love and comfort", and offered little in the way of hope: "I wish that someone would hold me/Wrap their arms around a shrinking somebody." In every aspect – its sound, the circumstances of its recording, and its authorial perspective – *Comfort Comes* was a bridge to *The Holy Bible*.

"That song haunts me," said Wire.







**Forward march! The Manics unveil their new military look, a tribute to their heroes Echo & The Bunnymen, 1994.**

“It’s so fucking minimal and miserable, so bare and raw. And honest.”

Late in 1993, they had visited Philip Hall and played him demo recordings of two new songs. The first of these, Mausoleum, had originally been titled No Birds, inspired by two separate visits to the Nazi death camps at Dachau and Belsen during the Gold Against The Soul tour. The second song was the harrowing Die In The Summertime. “Oh cheery!” the ailing Hall said. “Thanks for that!” With just weeks to live, their manager approved the new direction. “He was slumped in the corner, and wasn’t really with it,” Wire recalled. “It was sad. But at the end, he said, ‘Yeah, this rock’n’roll has got to stop – this sounds like you’re doing the right thing.’”

Even as darkness closed in around them, the Manics were locating an esprit de corps, one that lent a paradoxical aura of harmony to the writing and recording of *The Holy Bible*. On the January 1994 UK tour which heralded the release of *Life Becoming A Landslide*, the Manics began dressing in military fatigues. It was partly a tribute to their heroes Echo & The Bunnymen – and, as with that precedent, the Manics fans began copying the uniform look – but also an expression of their embattled mindset.

A collective resolve that positioned them diametrically opposite the imminent explosion of Britpop.

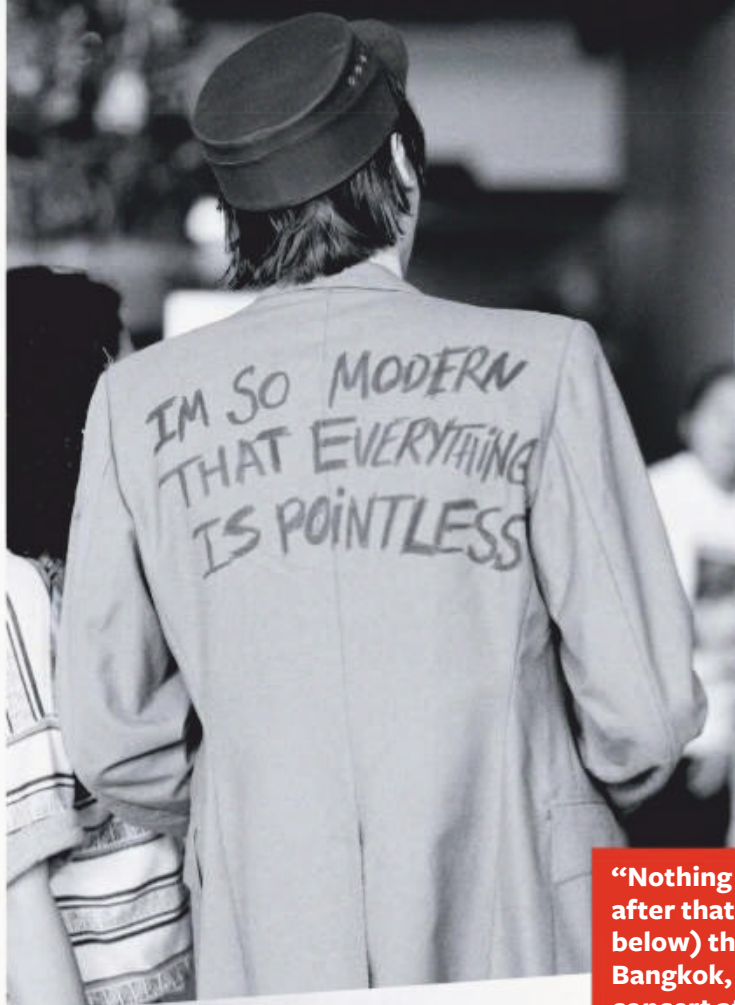
“It gave us an identity,” Wire said. “Just after that, we got the worst possible NME Award, for ‘Best Radio Session’. That was a special night, because you had Damon and Justine at their student love peak, and Liam at his coolest, Graham Coxon looked great... We went up onstage and got this crap award. And Liam shouted out, ‘Fuck off, ya c\*\*ts!’ James just looked at him, really hard, and went, ‘Yeah, all right, come on then.’ And there was a deathly silence. We felt really together that night, totally at ease as a band. And from that moment on, it was just a telepathic mission.”

Reconvening at Sound Space with Silva in February, the first three songs recorded for *The Holy Bible* – 4st 7lb, Faster and Of Walking Abortion – were broadly representative of the record’s musical and lyrical preoccupations: didactic bulletins from an existential twilight zone. Faster built on Comfort Comes’ geometric template, albeit permitting the occasional heroic flash, like cymbals. Bradfield spent three weeks trying to write the music to a lyric that he considered the best he’d been given, finally nailing it at the 21st attempt. “I thought,

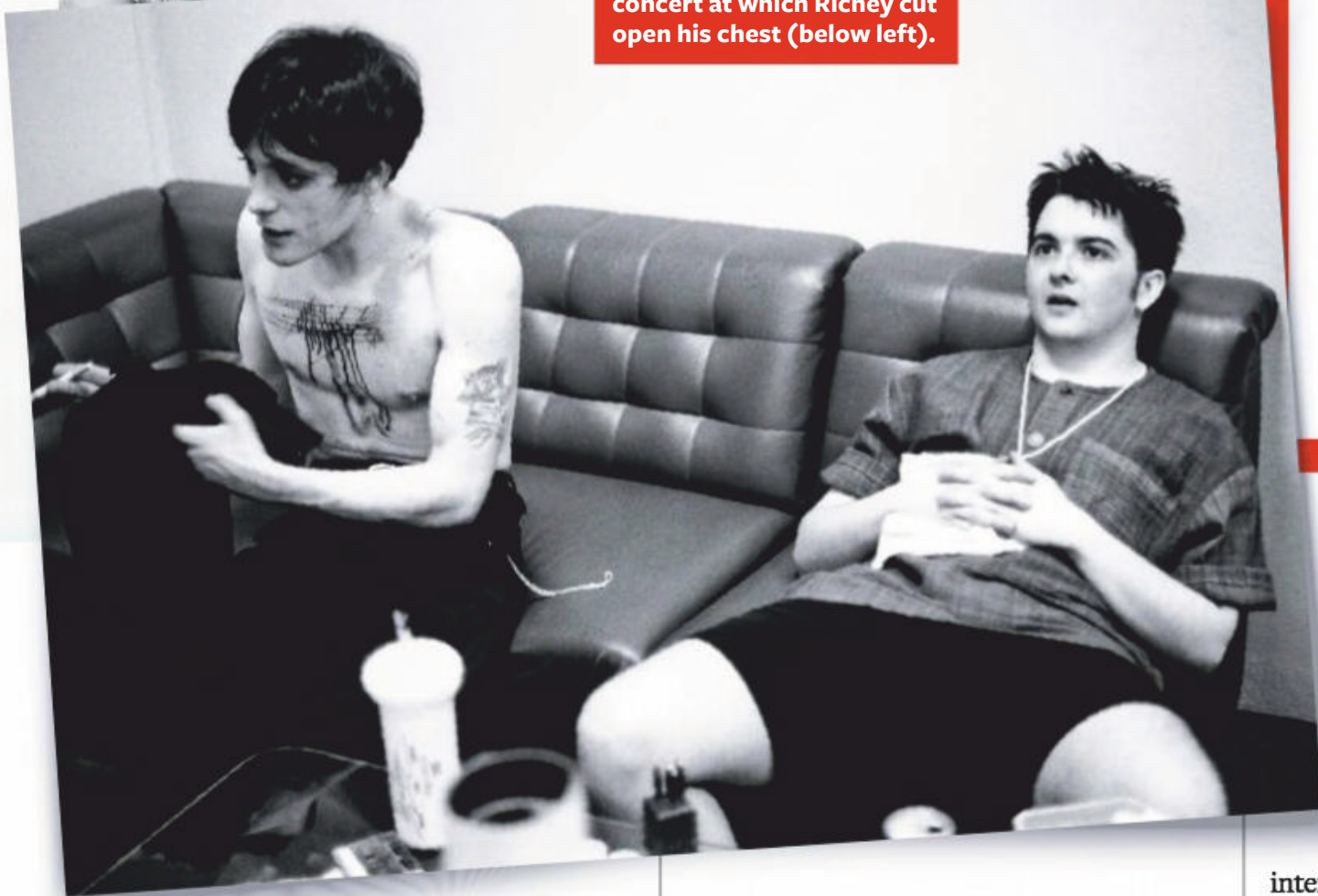
‘This has got to be a single, it covers so much in one lyric.’ So, of course, as soon as I decided that, it wouldn’t happen. I was at my mum and dad’s house, a Friday night, they were out, my mum was playing darts, and I was thinking I would have to hand this one over to Sean. Then, I just thought, ‘Let the lyrics speak to you.’ I looked at the rhyme and metre of ‘I am an architect, they call me a butcher’, and thought it’s got to be regimented. ‘Long live regimentation’, that quote from Saul Bellow’s novel *Dangling Man* came into my head. I thought, ‘Yes! We can do this!’ All the songs were marching towards something, and it just became more aggressive. Straighter. Strychnined. Angular. Colder.”

With Skids’ Stuart Adamson and Magazine’s John McGeoch his twin post-punk guitar pillars, Bradfield stoked the furnace. Newly single – his long-term girlfriend had ended their relationship shortly before the recording began – Bradfield dictated a relentless schedule in the studio, 14 hours a day, seven days a week, for six weeks. “James was the leader,” said Wire. “His musical vision dictated the tone of the whole record. People say it’s Richey’s album, but James was unbelievably driven. Richey was too, of course, but James seemed





**"Nothing was the same after that": (above and below) the Manics in Bangkok, 23 April, 1994, the concert at which Richey cut open his chest (below left).**



**"Poor old Richey. The only thing that kept us going was knowing we'd made the right record."**  
**Nicky Wire**

supposed self-control, the defeat you suffer from getting control over yourself and not eating, that's the coda at the end. I remember doing a couple of heroic guitar bits in the coda and Nick popping his head round the corner of the control room. 'Steady on, Slash! This is not the record!'"

For all the material's bleak intensity, the atmosphere in the studio was upbeat. Wire's photographs of the session are full of smiles. When Edwards finished the lyric to *IfwhiteAmericatoldthetruthforonedayit'sworldwouldfallapart* – Sean Moore's drumming masterclass, and a critique of US racism that contentiously advocates more liberal gun laws – he pronounced: "Charlton Heston'll like this one!"

"There was genuine good humour recording that album," Wire said. "It was very cohesive, everyone was really gentle with each other. You knew the right things were coming together."

The band's avowed non-musician, Edwards would sit in the office next to the control room with his ever-present typewriter, writing lyrics, designing artwork, scheming future tours and ideas. He sourced the dialogue samples that precede each track on the album, crudely >>

the one with the more personal agonies at the time."

On previous Manics albums, Richey Edwards and Nicky Wire had contributed lyrics equally, writing as a collaborative partnership. On *The Holy Bible*, however, the words were around 75 per cent Edwards'. *Faster* would be the last song the pair wrote together: Edwards took six lines from a song Wire had been writing based around the lyric: "So damn easy to cave in/Man kills everything", and finished it off. Nicky suggested the title. "I felt it in him. I remember saying, 'I can't keep up with you, it seems like everything's speeding up in your head...' The acceleration of culture to a point of no return. When he gave us the lyrics to *Yes*, for example, I said, 'I can't add a single thing to that'. It was a perfect piece of prose. The genesis of *Ifwhiteamerica...* was

mine but we only used four or five lines because Richey's stuff was so brilliant. His masterpiece, *4st 7lb*, I didn't touch at all. I looked at that and thought, 'I can't relate to it. I've no experience in those feelings.'"

Although Edwards would be guarded with regard to some of the inspiration for his increasingly internalised writing, he discussed *4st 7lb* with Bradfield. "Obviously he's into his personal battle with eating and vanity at this point. He conveyed to me – as the lyric did – the chatter of that vanity as the result of anorexia and bulimia: 'I must pass a mirror without looking at myself', 'Do I look as cool as Johnny Depp?' He was saying to me, 'Yes, it sounds nasty when I say it out loud but it is a genuine thing that goes on in my head and other people's, which leads to a very bad place.' So I wanted the first part of the song to convey the freneticism of that vanity. And then, the resolution was the



recording from TV documentaries and films. In the pre-internet age, the effort required to research the litany of obscure philosophical and political references in songs like *Archives Of Pain* and *Of Walking Abortion* was prodigious. Whenever the band was in London, Edwards would frequent the hallowed Reading Room of the British Museum, following in the footsteps of Karl Marx, George Orwell and Virginia Woolf. He also made regular pilgrimages to Compendium on Camden High Street, the capital's pre-eminent independent bookshop. "Richey must have bought well over 150 books from there, it was a running joke in the band," says Bradfield today. "They also sold academic research papers. He'd have a suitcase on the road, just filled with books. I don't mean this in a flippant way, but when Compendium went under [in 2000] I remember thinking, 'Well, that's probably because Richey's not around!' He absolutely loved that bookshop."

But as the recording process reached its conclusion and the band left the scuzzy cocoon of Sound Space, reality began to contaminate their world. At a gig in Bangkok in late April, Edwards cut his chest open with a set of knives gifted to him by a fan.

"Nothing was the same after that," Wire recalled. "It's only then it became a self-fulfilling prophecy – having to realise that you're playing these songs every night, singing these words every night, listening to these words every night. Something went badly wrong in Thailand. After that it was downhill."

Shortly after an apocalyptic performance at the Glastonbury Festival, Edwards was admitted to the Priory. At the end of August, the Manics played three festivals without him, their first gigs as a trio: they needed the money to pay for Edwards's treatment. *The Holy Bible* was released three days later, in the same week as Oasis's *Definitely Maybe*. It entered the UK album chart at Number 6, but within three weeks had plunged out of the Top 75, never to return.

With Edwards out of hospital and on a 12-step programme to curb his alcoholism, the band careered through two month-long European tours – the first supporting Therapy? in September, the second opening for Suede in November – with a month headlining around the UK in-between.

**"You can only do something like that when you are young and fearless. Perhaps you can never be that brave again." Nicky Wire**

# MANIC STREET FROM DESPAIR TO LIVE AT MBK HALL APRIL 22, 23



**The beginning of the end:  
Manic Street Preachers,  
MBK Hall, Bangkok, April, 1994.**

"By that Suede tour, we were absolutely shit-hot," said Wire. "We only played for 35 minutes each night and we were blisteringly brilliant. But the record was dead as a dodo. No one cared. I was very close to leaving the band. I was having chronic stomach pains.

James was just pissed out of his mind, you wouldn't see him until the evening of the gig, all the rest of the time he'd be sleeping and drinking. Poor old Richey. I didn't feel I was in the greatest position to be the shoulder to cry on. The only thing that kept us going was knowing we'd made the right record."

By the time they arrived at the Astoria, it felt like an endgame was underway. The reason Sean Moore trashed his drums at the Astoria on 21 December was he didn't expect he'd need them again. "It was a relief. We'd reached rock bottom. We pretty much thought that was going to be it – that those would be the last gigs we'd ever do."

Bradfield saw things a little differently. "That was *The Holy Bible* finished. But even





after all the bad stuff, I felt if things could work out we'd be going somewhere new. Something had to change. I knew Richey in the band would be different. Because sooner or later, in his head, he was gonna realise he had the answers and no one else. And obviously, he did! But just in a different way."

**A**lthough by no means their most commercially successful album, *The Holy Bible* is so intrinsic to the Manic Street Preachers that the band have honoured it with two

commemorative editions. A 10th anniversary version featured the unheard mix by Tom Lord-Alge, intended for the album's American release that was cancelled after Edwards disappeared. That reissue came out in late 2004, inconveniently adjacent to the release of the band's seventh album *Lifeblood*. At a meeting, Martin Hall warned them to expect reviews of the new record to feature invidious comparisons with their

classic record from the past that was now forever wrapped up in the tragedy of Richey Edwards.

"It is awkward for us," Bradfield admitted at the time. "We're making life harder for ourselves, but it would have felt wrong if we'd hidden our past at the expense of our future. We felt it was being respectful. We can't indulge in many Richey-isms. We can't put his picture up onstage. I felt it was hard for me to get involved in this morass of Richey history, except for when it's quintessentially about him, and that's *The Holy Bible*. People forget that the album wasn't always associated with Richey's disappearance. It was associated with his being as creatively heightened as you could be."

A 20th anniversary edition arrived in 2014, with a book reproducing Edwards's typewritten lyrics, his preparatory concept for the cover design and other notes and fragments ("My working title for the album, jauntily, was *The Poetry Of Death*," Wire chuckled). In December that year, almost exactly two decades on from the final three Astoria gigs, the band toured the UK, playing

*The Holy Bible* in its entirety. "When we did the 10-year edition, I didn't really listen to the record," Wire admitted. "I still thought it was a bit too close. But the more I've been listening lately, and practising, it's made me feel a bit sad, made me realise you can only do something like that when you are really young and fearless. Perhaps you can never be that brave again."

In 2019, when its depiction of homo sapiens as a failed species hardly seems controversial, the album's 25th anniversary is being left to pass quietly. As a group, the Manic Street Preachers haven't played any of its songs live since 2015. "The reason is, you can't fake them," Nicky Wire

says today. "They are not entertainment, they are a state of mind – a uniform rejection and examination of humanity. A brutal poetry of disgust."

Just about the way the world is. **Q**

## LINER NOTES

**Released:** 30 August 1994

**Highest UK Chart Position:** 6

**Producers:** Manic Street Preachers, Steve Brown, Alex Silva

**Recorded:** February–March 1994

**Studio:** Sound Space Studios, Cardiff

### Track Listing:

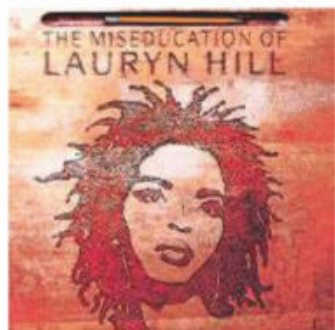
1. Yes
2. If white america told the truth for one day it's world would fall apart
3. Of Walking Abortion
4. She Is Suffering
5. Archives Of Pain
6. Revol
7. 4st 7lb
8. Mausoleum
9. Faster
10. This Is Yesterday
11. Die In The Summertime
12. The Intense Humming Of Evil
13. P.C.P.



# KATE TEMPEST

The rapper and poet on the records that shaped her.

## LAURYN HILL THE MISEDUCATION OF LAURYN HILL (1998)



obsessed with her phonetics and her control and also her content. Her ability to be so confrontational but so benevolent really moved me.”

“I loved The Score by the Fugees, and when she released this I was floored by it. It was so refreshing to hear her be able to have her say – sometimes when I was listening to The Score, I would get annoyed when the others came in cos I just wanted her to do another lyric. I remember writing her lyrics down in my notebook and thinking, ‘How did she do that?’ I was

## JOHN COLTRANE OLÉ COLTRANE (1961)



with a double bass then goes into this 18-minute-long, euphoric, mystical explosion of sound. The whole album is so moving.”

“When I was a teenager I was really into jazz. Why? I smoked a lot of weed. This is a discovery I made when I was about 13, just walking past this record shop in Lewisham Centre. I saw the cover, and I thought, ‘What is that?’ I loved John Coltrane but I didn’t make the connection. But I went and bought it and listened to it, and it was unbelievable. The first track [Olé] begins

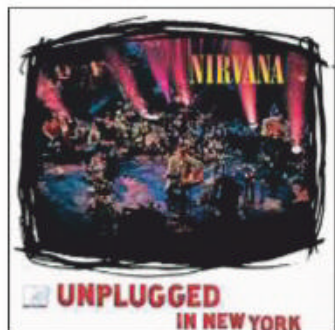
## GZA LIQUID SWORDS (1995)



the detail, the breadth of his vision was staggering to me. This album is a lesson to any aspiring rapper that anything is possible.”

“I got obsessed with Wu-Tang – it became a religion. When I first got into them, my favourite rappers were Ghostface Killah and Method Man, because they’re so charismatic and funny and exciting to listen to. But when I discovered Liquid Swords by GZA it was like, ‘OK, this is a lesson.’ He was a revelation. The filmic, cinematic quality of his perspective,

## NIRVANA MTV UNPLUGGED IN NEW YORK (1994)



was a swear word. I would have been about six. I was overwhelmed with the power of how he sang these words I wasn’t allowed to know.”

“I felt so close to Kurt’s expression of his lyrics. Even though they were covers, the way he sang them made them mean something new to me. I loved the quieter instrumentation, because it let me see into how the songs were structured. I remember once stealing a Nirvana tape from my brother’s room and playing it in my room secretly and rewinding it every time there

## CHESTER P FROM THE ASHES (2007)



The beauty of the music he makes from pretty dark experiences is reassuring. It reassures me about the positive nature of making music.”

“Chester P was one half of a duo called Task Force, who were really big when I was coming into UK hip-hop. He was one of the first London rappers that really moved me. His poetics and his mysticism are unparalleled in UK lyricism. He demands your attention, because he’s putting so much attention into his lyricism. He’s lived the life, and he draws from his experiences.

## LEONARD COHEN SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN (1967)



the commonality between all of these albums that changed my life is the lyricism. Even John Coltrane. He’s the most lyrical horn player.”

“I love him. He’s one of those people you know is an incredible artist, but there’s a moment when you discover someone – suddenly they become your discovery, your artist. It doesn’t matter that the rest of the world knows how amazing Leonard Cohen is, when you discover how amazing he is, that’s when it’s profound. This is when I discovered his lyricism. For me,

## VARIOUS ARTISTS CHAMPION SOUND (A SELECTION OF VINTAGE AND TODAY’S REGGAE) (2001)



thing to me to have a connection to soundsystems. It’s a healing thing.”

“The record store I used to work in sold a lot of reggae, and this album I bought because it had U-Roy, Sizzla and Buju Banton on it, but there were loads of songs on it I didn’t know. The Buju Banton song is Untold Stories and, politically, the lyrics are hardcore, but the expression is beautiful. I used to go to dub raves and soundsystems as a kid. It’s an important

## NINA SIMONE THE BEST OF NINA SIMONE (1969)



a tragic element to her life – you don’t get to do what she was able to do without it taking a toll. I’m so grateful for the sacrifices she made.”

“This is a compilation. All the big songs were on it, but there’s a song called Four Women that really blew me away. It’s about four black women and what they’ve been through, and it’s devastating. The emotional complexity she discovers in the lyrics is heartbreaking. When Nina Simone tells her truth the world changes. As with all the great heroes in our culture, there’s



**“When I  
discovered  
Liquid Swords  
it was like,  
‘OK, this is  
a lesson.’”**



**“Top GZA!”: Kate Tempest  
unveils her storming  
selection of platters.**



# THE MAVERICK SOUL OF MICHAEL KIWANUKA

**BY TOM DOYLE**

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PHOTOGRAPHY:  
MICHAEL CLEMENT



Music from big pink:  
Michael Kiwanuka,  
Brick Lane, London,  
15 August, 2019.







**N**

ot long ago, Michael Kiwanuka was on a day trip to Winchester, mooching around a shop, when he picked up an interesting-looking interior design book. Written by Miv Watts, mother of actress Naomi Watts, it offered a peek inside the bohemian-leaning homes of the likes of Marianne Faithfull and actor Griffin Dunne. Kiwanuka had just moved into his new place in Southampton with his wife and reckoned the book could give them some décor ideas. He winced about the idea of buying it, though. The problem was the title: *The Maverick Soul*. Michael Kiwanuka may feel like a bit of a maverick soul, but he has a problem admitting it to himself.

"I was really embarrassed by the title," he smiles, sheepishly. "I was thinking, 'If friends come round, they're gonna be saying, 'What's wrong with you?'" A friend who was in the shop with him at the time told him not to be so daft. "She was like, 'Oh man, just own it, y'know.' Then I was like, 'Oh... cool.'"

The concept of "owning it" is the one that's currently defining the 32-year-old

Michael Kiwanuka after years of wrestling with self-doubt. It's there in his bold presentation of himself on the cover of his third album, in a painting by classical/futurist Atlanta artist Markeidric Walker, where he's depicted as something akin to a Tudor-era African king from an imagined parallel universe. It's also there in the title of the new record: *Kiwanuka*. Back at school in North London, he'd squirm when teachers had trouble pronouncing his surname. Down the years, as an artist, he's wondered whether changing it might bring him greater success, although the thought always depresses him.

"You watch the Queen film and he's like, 'I wanna be called Mercury,'" he says. "That left me feeling quite down, y'know, thinking, 'That's a shame that you have to do it.' Everyone's running from who they are in order to be accepted."

So, now, rather than running away from his true identity, he's running towards it?

"Yeah!" he exclaims, instantly



**“I’ve always struggled – waiting for approval. This album reflects a change in that. When people can’t pronounce your name, you say it proudly. When someone says your music’s retro, you go, ‘I’m owning it.’”**

**Songs in the key of strife:** (left) Kiwanuka at work on his self-titled third, Los Angeles, February, 2019; (right) with album co-producer Danger Mouse, aka Brian Burton.

far greater affinity with the likes of Marvin Gaye and Bill Withers than he did with modern urban artists such as Bashy and Chipmunk, both of whom he’d recently worked with as a session guitarist.

In his creatively messy, slightly studenty Kentish Town flat situated above a parade of shops, he offered you a cup of tea in an oversized Sports Direct mug and flipped open his laptop to show you the video for his latest single, the aching acoustic R&B folk of Home Again. On his turntable sat a well-played copy of Roberta Flack’s super-emotive 1969 album First Take.

“It still probably is on my turntable,” he laughs today, sipping water in a café on Brick Lane. “I love that album.”

Back then he’d admitted to being a textbook over-thinker. Is he the same now?

“Definitely, but I’ve learnt to be able to switch it off quite easily,” he states. “I can just put it in music. A lot of artists admit they’re over-thinkers. That’s probably why you have to write it down, because you’ve got to get it out of your head.”

It was a wonder really that the teenage Michael Kiwanuka was ever drawn to music as an expressive outlet. Brought up in the leafy middle-class enclave of Muswell Hill, North London, his parents escapees from Uganda at the tail-end of dictator Idi Amin’s ’70s regime, there was barely any music ever played at home. The one record-player the family owned was broken and no one ever bothered to get it fixed.

Gravitating, at the age of 12, towards the mostly white skater kids in school, he practised his board tricks, found acceptance, was introduced to Nirvana and Radiohead and dabbled with weed. “I never really liked it,” he says of the latter. “It was just to fit in. I would get really paranoid. I didn’t like being out of control.”

Picking up a guitar for the first time, he immediately found his identity, earning respect from his peers, black and white, through school performances. Still, he felt slightly adrift. He’d have to travel to blacker areas in North London to get what he calls his “picky hair” cut, but even then he stood out as an oddity.

“I’d walk into the barber’s,” he says, “and they’d be like, ‘Who’s this weirdo with skate jeans?’”

A trip to Uganda with his parents at the >>

brightening. “Owning the name. I’ve always struggled with that – waiting for approval, waiting for someone to say that it’s OK. This album reflects a change in that. When people can’t pronounce your name, you say it proudly. When someone says your music’s retro, you go, ‘I’m owning it.’”

“I’ve always been quite apologetic. Ever since I was young. Finally, I’m not gonna apologise.”

**M**eeting Michael Kiwanuka for the first time back in 2011, it was clear that he was no ordinary new artist. An old soul in a young body, his heart belonging in the 1970s, he felt







Why so sad?: (left) Kiwanuka has a little ponder, London, 2019; (right) playing the End Of The Road Festival, Dorset, 30 August, 2019.

## SOUL ASYLUM

The recorded works of Michael Kiwanuka.



### HOME AGAIN

(POLYDOR, 2012)

Recorded on the Isle Of Wight with The Bees frontman-turned-producer Paul Butler, Kiwanuka's debut sounded like a long-lost folk/soul album from 1971 somehow rediscovered in a dusty second-hand record shop crate. Flute and slinky strings adorned the groove of Tell Me A Tale and the loping Bones first spotlighted the singer's lovelorn side.



### LOVE & HATE

(POLYDOR, 2016)

After suffering from difficult-second-album blues (with the unreleased Night Songs), Kiwanuka re-emerged triumphant with a new production team of Danger Mouse and Inflo. The results echoed the majestic orchestral arrangements of David Axelrod and, in 10-minute opener Cold Little Heart, a slow-burning re-imagining of Wish You Were Here-era Pink Floyd.



### KIWANUKA

(POLYDOR, 2019)

The thrill of creative liberation bursts out of the speakers on this self-titled third. There are shades of Kiwanuka's heroes (Gil Scott-Heron, Donny Hathaway, Bill Withers) but this time around the singer sounds very much like his own man, whether playfully pitching down his voice to sound like a 70-year-old or duetting with a gospel choir on I've Been Dazed.

age of 18 only underlined the fact that he didn't really feel that he belonged there either. "People knew that you're not Ugandan," he says. "So, you could get some hassle. But it wasn't, like, dangerous. I mean, we've got so much family there, we'd always be safe. But, yeah, going through the markets in central Kampala, y'know, like, haggling... at 18 I wasn't so used to that."

Back in London, as a guitar prodigy playing in churches, he first met and started hanging out with Labrinth and his extended family, feeling more at home among them for a time. "It sounds stupid," he laughs, "but if you needed to borrow a comb, there was a comb." When Labrinth hooked him

up with urban studio session gigs playing guitar, however, his feelings of apartness returned. "I just knew I could do more," he remembers. "It wasn't fulfilling me. So, that kind of inspired me to write songs."

His main inspiration came from a perhaps unlikely source: a friend copying Bill Withers's 1973 album Live At Carnegie Hall onto his iPod for him. "Usher didn't represent me, Dizzee Rascal didn't represent me, nothing did," he says. "But when I heard Bill Withers, for some reason, that did. It was soulful but introverted. I could hear influences of folk and soul and funk and jazz. He was doing everything. And [snaps fingers], it just got me."

Kiwanuka still had some way to go in terms of overcoming his own introspection, though. At his first gig, fronting a band of mates at a Kentish Town pub in 2008, he was so shy that he wouldn't properly sing into the microphone, prompting a Brazilian woman in the audience to step up to the stage and encourage him.

"The idea of singing was hell," he admits. "She was like, 'You've got something there, man. Don't be scared of the mic. Sing into it.' It was a bit like the guitar when I was in school, when people kept saying, 'This sounds good.' So, I learnt to trust that. And I love the feeling of singing. I'd just close my eyes and it felt amazing."





**“ I don’t look at myself and see ‘greatness’. Part of me is, ‘When’s the bubble gonna burst? When will they find me out?’ ”**

**S**even years on from that first tentative step – and in the wake of him being discovered and signed to Polydor Records and his debut album, 2012’s *Home Again*, reaching Number 4 in the UK charts – Q next encountered Michael Kiwanuka in a Hoxton recording studio in 2015, putting the finishing touches to its follow-up. That day he talked excitedly about the album, *Night Songs*, which he described as “dark soul”.

But when his record label heard *Night Songs*, they deemed it uncommercial and canned its release. “The label were like, ‘I don’t know if we can sell this,’” he says today with a sigh. “They just didn’t think the album was good enough, right enough. *Night Songs* was maybe too dark, too slow. It got scrapped, but it’s a great album.”

Disillusioned, Kiwanuka thought about giving up. “I got pretty down, cos you’re like, ‘Well, I don’t know how to do anything else.

I put my heart and soul into this.’ So it was like, ‘See you later.’” Instead of packing it all in, though, after a few months he began casually recording new demos with London-based hip-hop and indie producer Inflo. Around the same time, out of the blue, American producer Brian Burton, aka Danger Mouse, got in touch.

“He was saying, ‘Are you gonna do another record?’” Kiwanuka remembers. “I was like, ‘Dunno how. I tried, but I don’t >>



know how to make records.' He said, 'Do something maybe people wouldn't expect. What would you sound like a bit angry? That'd be interesting to hear.' I said, 'Well, I think you might like this song...'

That song was *Black Man In A White World*, the racial outsider anthem that was to become the centrepiece of Kiwanuka's 2016 second album, *Love & Hate*, which in the production hands of Danger Mouse and

Inflo expanded the singer's sound into more rousing or atmospheric territory. "Working with Danger Mouse and Inflo, they allow me to just not over-think," he says. "I can literally be just dreaming and playing. It was like having a trampoline and falling, and just knowing that you'll land on safety."

It worked commercially, too, with *Love & Hate* debuting at Number 1. Did that feel like vindication? "Yeah, crazy," he beams.

"Complete vindication. But overwhelming. I don't look at myself and see 'greatness'. So, when someone says you're Number 1, part of me is... 'Uh, well, when's the bubble gonna burst? When are they going to find me out?'

"But then it was like, 'I need to stop that.' If I'm going to be able to try and get any further than this, it's just gonna be a crutch. You're gonna need to trust yourself and believe in yourself."



**"You going my way?":**  
Michael Kiwanuka,  
London, August, 2019.



**“Usher didn’t represent me, Dizzee Rascal didn’t represent me, nothing did. But when I heard Bill Withers, that did. It was soulful but introverted.”**



That newfound belief is clear throughout the tracks on Kiwanuka, which Danger Mouse and Inflo also produced. Uplifting, Gil Scott-Heron-like funky opener, You Ain’t The Problem, for instance, is clearly a message to himself. But still, amid the self-assurance, Kiwanuka can still lob in a lyrical grenade, in this case the emotionally bare confession, “I used to hate myself.”

“Well, you definitely exaggerate and saturate things in order to make a point,” he offers, a touch uncomfortably. “Yeah, you’d have times like that. But it’s not, like, every day. You have to be aware of those thoughts. Cos it can take over and that’s where it gets dangerous. Music helps because you can get it out of your system. But then the takeaway from that is people ask, ‘You really used to think that?’”

In other words, Michael Kiwanuka is never screening his thoughts when it comes to his lyrics. See also the bleak (but beautiful) I’ll Never Love from Love & Hate...

“I remember doing that one and just thinking, ‘I hope it’s not a good song, so it’s not on the album,’” he laughs. “Because you’ve put yourself out there.”

**N**ovember 2018, New York, and in Electric Lady Studios, Michael Kiwanuka was channelling the greats, sitting in the same spot where his hero Stevie Wonder had cut some of his most famous tracks. For him, it was a mark of how far he’d managed to travel from his North London upbringing. The standout from these sessions for the Kiwanuka album was the slow-burning Piano Joint (This Kind Of Love), a stirring, future classic ballad that is perhaps his best song to date (and which seems destined to be ruined by over-emoting contestants on The X Factor).

“New York really inspired that song,” he says. “The chords made me think of ’70s New York and that soulful sound of, like, Donny Hathaway and Roberta Flack. It has that kind of regality to it.”

Elsewhere on the album, Kiwanuka revives the defiant spirit of the ’60s and ’70s Black Power movement with Hero, written about Black Panther Fred Hampton,

murdered by police in Chicago in 1969. The singer is aware that he’s also delivering a potent message about enduring racism in the 21st century. “Racism is now subtle,” he reasons. “It’s not just the ‘N’ word.”

Kiwanuka says that he sometimes experiences this type of understated racism in his everyday life. Sitting in the first-class carriage of a train from Southampton to London recently, he suddenly felt conspicuously black.

“There was this lady, probably a grandmother, and her daughter, who were looking for a seat,” he says. “There were no seats available on the train, it was packed. The daughter was saying, ‘Oh, we can’t sit here. This is first class.’ Then the older lady just looked at me and was, like, ‘Really?’ And then walked on [laughs]. So, you get things like that. It was like, ‘How could he afford a first-class ticket?’ Because I’ve got Afro picky hair and I’m more hipster-y, I don’t get it as much. But it’s subtle. Very subtle.”

For him, the words of Black Man In A White World still resonate strongly. “Yeah,” he nods. “At my gigs, there’s not that many black people around. Where I live, there’s not many black people around. At the gigs, it’s changing slowly, a little bit... but not really. It’s something, again, that I don’t mind any more. I was always the odd one out in terms of black culture. And white culture just kind of dug it, so I followed that.”


Whatever the demographic of his fans, Michael Kiwanuka has clearly made a deep connection with his audience: his music being political, but not preachy, and dreamy and escapist at a time when people really need that. Not surprisingly, he often smells the waft of weed rising from the crowd towards him onstage.

“I don’t take any drugs,” he stresses. “But it’s like, I get it. People searching and trying to get to that otherworldly place. I guess I like the idea that people may sit and really listen and want to be taken away. But real life is exciting to me. I think it’s a lot harder to face, but once you get used to facing it, it’s a high enough for me.”

“Since the albums have got more intense,” he adds, “gig-wise it’s way more intense for me. So, even if I wanted to go crazy, I wouldn’t be able to. Because after a gig, I’m like, ‘Damn... emotionally, vocally... that took everything.’”

It may have taken Michael Kiwanuka more than three decades, but he’s finally comfortable in his own skin and walking tall. Settling down with his wife has definitely helped that process.

“People seem to think that settling down is, like, the end,” he grins. “But it’s kind of the beginning for me.”

And so this is where we find Michael Kiwanuka in 2019: knowing who he is, knowing what he can do. Solid ground under his feet. And, yes, absolutely owning it. 



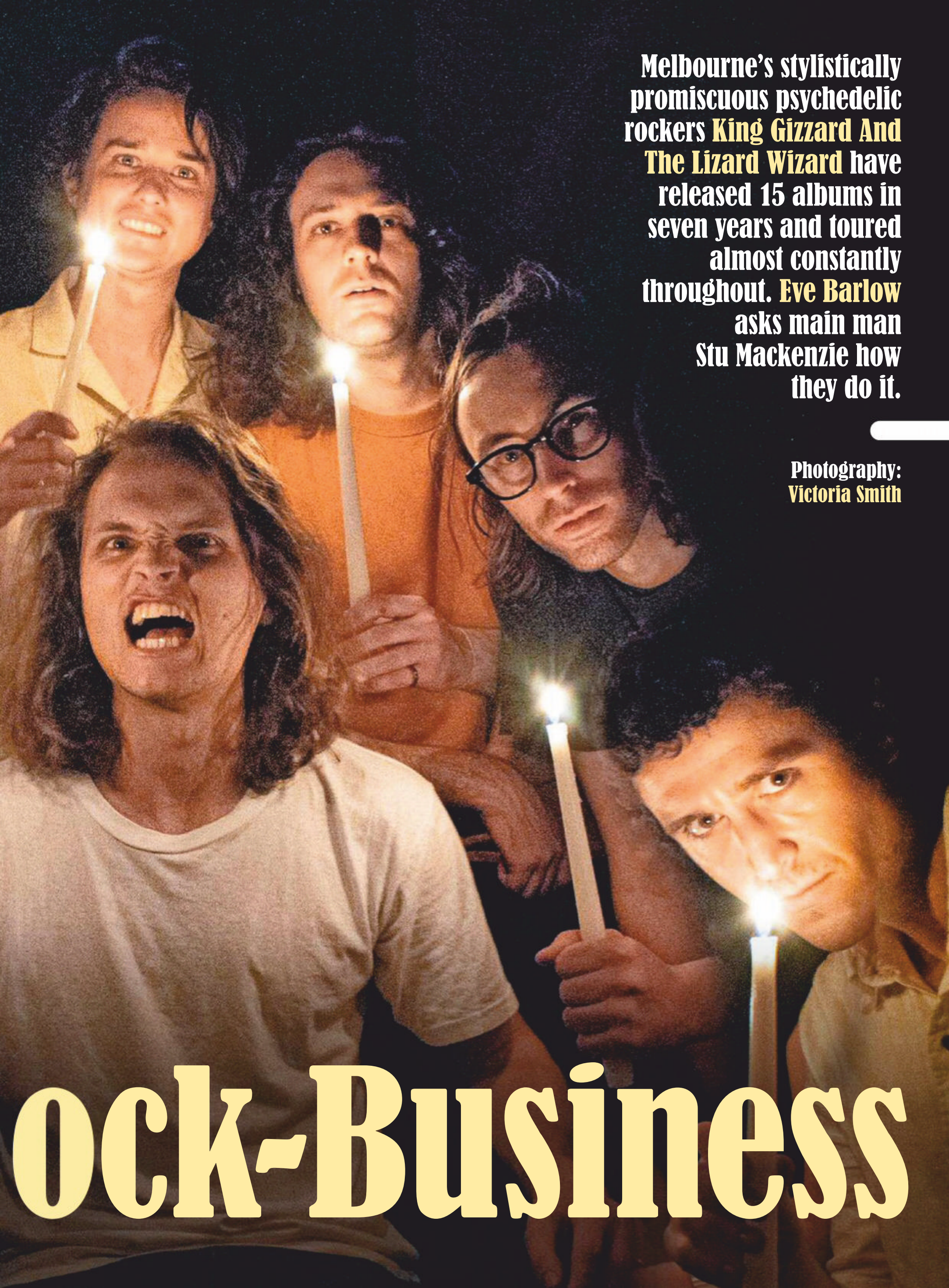
KING GIZZARD AND  
THE LIZARD WIZARD

You can hold a candle to them:  
King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard  
(clockwise, from top left, Cook Craig,  
Ambrose Kenny-Smith, Michael  
Cavanagh, Eric Moore, Joey Walker,  
Stu Mackenzie and Lucas Skinner)  
light up LA, 13 August, 2019.

# The Hardest Working Men In Heaaaaavy-R







Melbourne's stylistically promiscuous psychedelic rockers **King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard** have released 15 albums in seven years and toured almost constantly throughout. **Eve Barlow** asks main man Stu Mackenzie how they do it.

Photography:  
**Victoria Smith**

# ock-Business





## t's the

afternoon at The Greek Theater in LA and running around backstage are a pack of excitable Australians. There's something collegiate, even adolescent about them. The Greek is a landmark venue. The halls are decorated with framed pictures of icons who have headlined. There's a display case in which performers etch their own autograph after shows. They include Liam Gallagher, Billie Eilish, Ringo Starr and Harry Styles. The ludicrously named psych group King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard will be the most recent – and lengthiest – name. They don't travel light. There are seven of them for a start.

In the production office, their tour manager is fine-tuning the guestlist, which is filled with local LA friends for this first gig of their tour. Three days after this show a new LP comes out. It's an absurdist thrash metal album and has a tongue-firmly-in-cheek title – *Infest The Rats' Nest*. It's their 15th, and their second of this year (*Fishing For Fishies* came out in April). They formed in Melbourne only nine years ago but have put so much into King Gizzard (or King Gizz, as they nickname themselves) that their wide-ranging, bizarre catalogue (record titles include *Flying Microtonal Banana* and *Nonagon Infinity*, and span jazz, prog and soul) reflects a band three times their age. Frontman Stu Mackenzie answers for it. He's as prolific a writer as he is a player. Mackenzie is a guitar shredder, but will get behind the keys too, and has often brought a flute out mid-performance.

In person, Mackenzie is meeker than you'd expect. He's more verbose on record than off. "How you going?" he greets, chirpily, an ensemble of mad scientist long wiry hair, grey pipe jeans, a ripped T-shirt and Doc Martens. He's rail-thin with a boyish agelessness

**Wizards of Oz: (from top) Stu Mackenzie mentally prepares; backstage bacchanalia; the septet get set to dazzle LA.**

could be healthy. It's fully neurotic. If Mackenzie got the sense it was running away with him, he was able to sit down during the first half of this year and ask where he wanted King Gizzard to go, if anywhere. "It was a spiritual break," he says. "It's important to be able to define who you are. To have time to think not just about tomorrow but about what you wanna be. You can't do that if you're insanely busy. It becomes like Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs. You only think about what's in front of you." He pauses. "I found myself."

**K**ing Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard have been on a non-stop psychedelic crusade for almost 10 years. The time has evaporated to such an extent that Mackenzie can't remember his age. "I turn 20... fuck!" he says, eventually recalling that he'll be 29 soon. The members of King Gizzard are all "country kids". Mackenzie himself never stood still in his childhood. "The first few years of my life I lived in a VW. I was probably naked constantly. I had the freedom to do anything and not feel like I was gonna die." He and his parents lived in tiny towns; populations of 200. "That created a picture in my head of what the world was like. It's not real – the world is urban. I don't think I understood that until I moved into Melbourne and lived in a shared house under my friend's staircase. I lived in poverty for years." >>

that's only interrupted by the ring on his wedding finger. His fellow Lizard Wizards are gathered in an adjacent room, and resemble a University Challenge team, not a globally travelled rock troupe. As Mackenzie explains their history, TV theme tunes boom out from their dressing room. The Simpsons segues abruptly into *Game Of Thrones*. Mackenzie doesn't bat an eyelid.

King Gizz arrived yesterday from Australia. They're nervous. The Greek isn't their usual haunt. It's seated – not that this will restrict the headbangers among their fans. You wouldn't think a band who have toured heavily since 2013 with zero breaks would have worries, but Mackenzie offers that they've just taken six months off. Unheard of. "It felt like taking stock," he says. "We've been close to burning out in the past. We knew the warning signs this time." They were? "You just get tired?" he asks, unsure of how to describe the effects of playing so many gigs you lose count. "Not like you want to sleep. You feel constantly exhausted. It's important to appreciate how fortunate we are. In order to do that sometimes you have to stop."

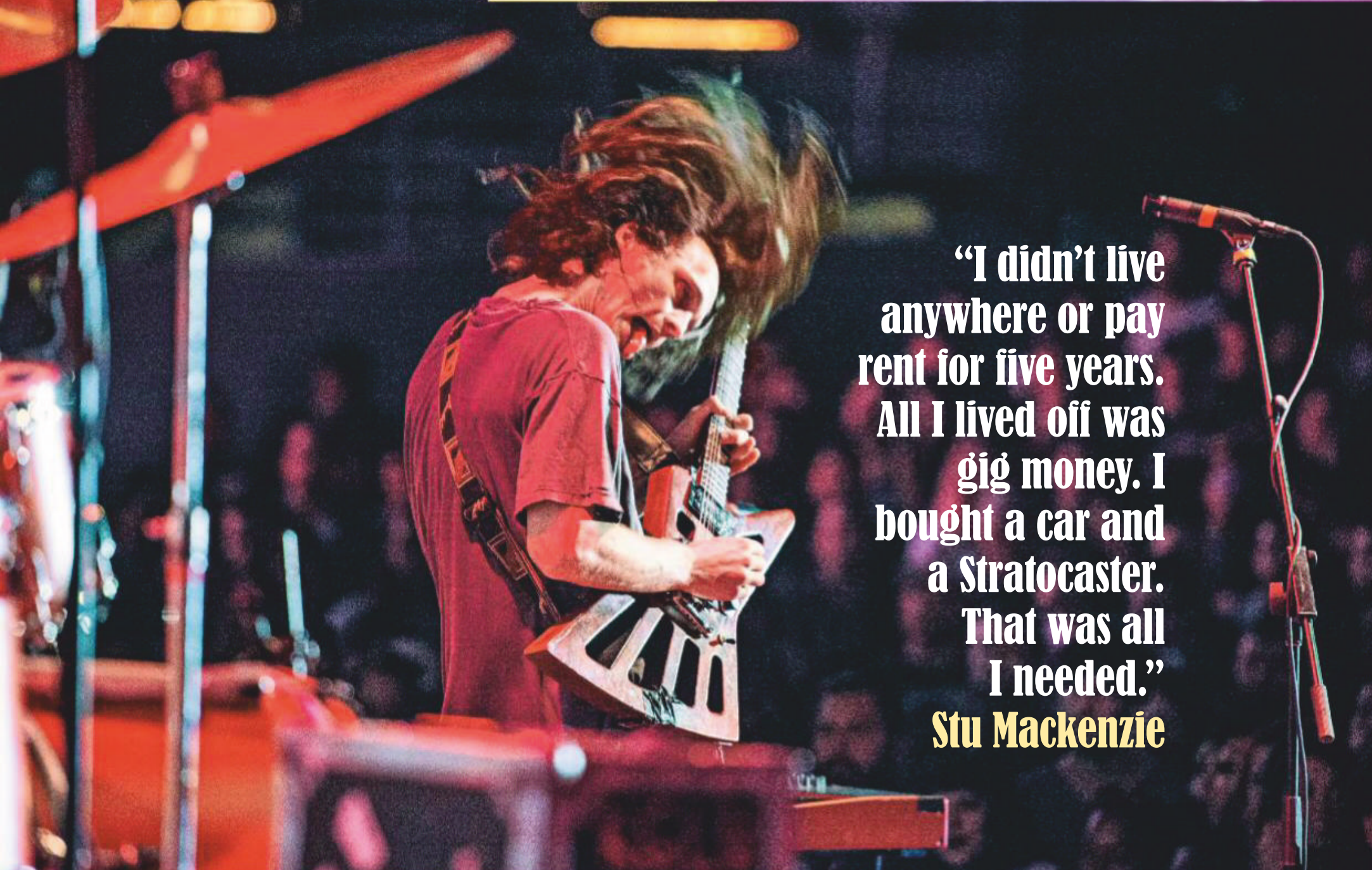
King Gizzard never stopped. Here is a band who in 2017 put out five albums. "I would strive not to do that again," laughs Mackenzie. You question how that work ethic



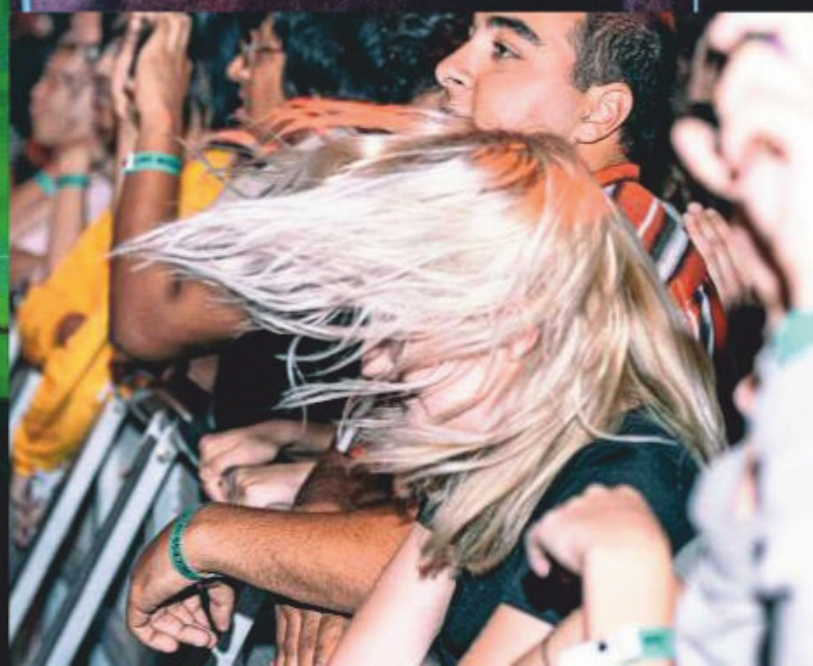
**KING GIZZARD AND  
THE LIZARD WIZARD**



Band of the free, home of the brave: (above) the Gizzard guys stretch out; (below) Mackenzie in full wig-out mode, Greek Theater, LA, 2019.



**“I didn’t live  
anywhere or pay  
rent for five years.  
All I lived off was  
gig money. I  
bought a car and  
a Stratocaster.  
That was all  
I needed.”  
Stu Mackenzie**







**The view from down under: King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard in a rare moment of non-music making.**

Mackenzie was a teenager in Melbourne when band life began and he took with him that ingrained liberty to do whatever he wanted. His ambition was to be an audio engineer. He never envisaged creating a band or touring the world. “I wanted to play music and I didn’t have the mental capacity to think about anything else. It was, ‘Let’s just think about how to play music today.’”

His fantasy was to work in a studio, to record bands. “Which sounds so hilarious in 2019,” he says. “I was living in the ’60s in my brain.” Mackenzie’s fascination with music knows no bounds. “I’ve played lots of instruments poorly,” he laughs. He was late to pick up a guitar (15 years old), his creative inclinations restricted to illustrating. “I thought, ‘I need to pick up a fucking instrument so I can hang out,’” he recalls. “Learning inspired me.”

He’d listen to American ’60s garage rock; music that was amateur but beautiful.

“It wasn’t important how good you were,” he says of the genre. “It was all about the energy. It showed me that you didn’t have to be skilled, you just had to bring a vibe.”

For years, this was Mackenzie’s approach. It was pragmatic, too. In Victoria, playing music was seen as a luxury, so his focus was on evading the guilt for trying to make a living from it. “Everyone would say, ‘You should have a job, mate.’ I needed to treat music like a job. It was survival. I didn’t live anywhere or pay rent for five years. All I lived off was gig money. I bought a car and a Stratocaster. That was all I needed.” At first, their line-up was fluid. “We played many shows before we called ourselves King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard for some fucking reason.” They’d play shows with 12 people. Sometimes they’d be a three-piece.

**“It’s important to be able to define who you are. You can’t do that if you’re insanely busy. It becomes like Maslow’s Hierarchy Of Needs. You only think about what’s in front of you. I found myself.”** **Stu Mackenzie**

“We made simple songs with two or three chords, three or four words so that no one had to rehearse,” he continues. “You could turn up with a guitar, keyboard or drumkit and play. It was an improv jam band, but not like The Grateful Dead or a jazz band, just freedom noise.” Today the band are: Ambrose Kenny-Smith (keys), Cook Craig (guitar, bass), Joey Walker (guitar, bass), Lucas Skinner (bass, keys), Michael Cavanagh (drums) and Eric Moore (drums, manager and owner of their label Flightless). Mackenzie went to school with Craig. He met Skinner and Kenny-Smith through guitar. The others he met upon relocating to Melbourne at 18. “The seven we are now were the seven people who stuck around and never left,” smiles Mackenzie.



# King Gizzard's Wizard Handbook

With 15 LPs, here's an introductory  
guide to the catalogue...

"There was a screening process without anyone realising. We're also best friends. There's an unsaid pact. If someone said, 'I don't wanna do this any more', we'd seriously reconsider the whole thing."

As soon as King Gizzard started gaining traction, Mackenzie realised he could use the band as his audio engineering education. "For me, making records is living out my fantasy," he says. "I love recording music. If I did that as a job I don't think that King Gizzard would exist. Because I wanted to do that as a job and no one would let me, I had to make my own micro industry."

It couldn't survive in Australia alone. Melbourne was a supportive environment, rich with venues and scenes. In recent years, Aussie success stories are abundant; from Tame Impala to Pond and Courtney Barnett. "Tame showed us that you could tour the world, playing trippy psychedelic rock music," he says. "Courtney's success has been ultra-inspiring. She's made incredibly Australian music. [It proved that] we can just be fucking dickhead Australians and it's cool. So it became apparent that we had to get the fuck outta there."

**I**n December last year, after a run of local shows in Australia, King Gizzard decided to down tools. Before long they were in each other's pockets, hanging out. "We made heaps of music," says Mackenzie. "We were busy doing what we wanted to do when we wanted to do it, rather than being on schedule." What they wanted to do was still be King Gizzard. Must have been a relief?

"Oh wow, yeah," he nods. "I felt lucky, like, 'This is great. Everything is fine. There's no reason to stress.'"

Infest The Rats' Nest is at first a little jarring. It sounds like Slayer or Motörhead. There have been smatterings of thrash in their previous material but this is the only occasion on which they've committed to a heavy metal LP. It sounds enraged. For a frontman who once told DIY magazine he thinks "intellectualising music is dumb," there's a change of tone. Infest The Rats' Nest is about climate change. The plot takes in humans relocating to Venus, such is the level of destruction they've inflicted upon Earth. "Having a break made me think about having an impact on the world in a positive and negative sense. We fucking fly around the world constantly and drive around in a huge bus – 2019 is substantially darker than 2009. I'm trying to have a positive net impact."

The writing process was a product of idle minds. "Not being on tour you gain perspective in life," says Mackenzie. "But you lose perspective in what the fuck you're doing in your own life." It's a paranoid record. "It's pissed-off at the world, the system, people and our stupidity." Planet B, the lead track, was the first they wrote – a clattering mess of marching drums, doom-laden guitars and thick bass. "It was a lightbulb moment," says Mackenzie. "We have those with records. This was the heaviest, fastest, loudest song we'd ever

made so we needed to make the heaviest, fastest, loudest record we'd ever made."


That's when Mackenzie's in-studio learning bug kicks into gear. "It's always felt natural," he says of the band's diversity. "It's never been, 'We need to make a record like this.' My favourite records all exist in a place in my mind. They have a little world attached to them." Significantly, too, when Mackenzie is considering what to do next he has nobody to answer to. The band put out all their records on their label, Flightless, run by Moore since 2012. He doesn't consider having to sell a metal album to any boss. "We do it all ourselves. We don't have anyone to show."

Tonight they have thousands of people to show. The fans are a psychedelic mafia; all with hair to armpits and matching beards, a hippy mass of metal-heads. Many are members of the LA alt scene, including Mac DeMarco stood near the sound desk. King Gizzard begin with the twin drumming of Moore and Cavanagh (who sport matching orange boiler suits). A contained moshpit is reserved at the front of the Greek's traditional seated basin for the most rampant acolytes. Inside it, everything's a bit Neanderthal, growing more erratic as the band play their heaviest, fastest, loudest music to date against a backdrop of rainbow-coloured visuals, which fly across the screen like psychedelic Star Wars credits.

Throughout the set, Mackenzie sticks his tongue out, crawls about like a reptile, or shakes his guitar overhead. It's a loose display that moves into ambient, tropical rock at points, delving into kosmische via a vocoder, aping the work of Unknown Mortal Orchestra or Tame Impala and yet far stranger, far more ramshackle. Mackenzie performs in the same clothes he wore earlier, the ends of his guitar strings so unruly they look like they might take his eyes out. Kenny-Smith stands on the stage's end, switching between maraca-shaking and harmonica solos. "I'd prefer if people didn't know what was gonna happen," said Mackenzie backstage earlier, commenting on how they used time off to concentrate on getting the shows back to their more improvisational origins.

For a frontman who can't exist without his ecosystem, his is an attitude of sincere gratitude. "It's humbling to play somewhere like this," he says backstage. "It's humbling to tour with your friends, make music for people who are actually listening. The first tour we did in

America we played to less than 10 people every night for two months. It's been gradual and it's insanely surprising that anyone comes."

The future is unclear for Mackenzie. "I might fucking drop dead. I don't know!" he says. It seems he's done more work to ensure that won't happen, having recently learned about life outside King Gizzard. "I didn't use to be able to switch off," he admits. The band has a studio in Melbourne. At night when Mackenzie leaves, all his instruments stay behind. Well, apart from his piano and that one guitar at home. "You have to live a normal life if you wanna write about normal stuff," he says. "I say that but I just wrote a load of songs about colonising Venus." He did. Then again, maybe we're closer to colonising Venus than we know. 

## 1. Best To Dive In With First Nonagon Infinity (2016)



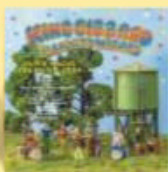
Recorded as an infinite loop, the psychedelic rock of Nonagon Infinity is designed so if played on repeat, its end transitions perfectly into its beginning. Bold yet cohesive.

## 2. Best For Horizontal Flight Flying Microtonal Banana (2017)



King Gizzard created microtonal instruments to work with on their ninth LP and recorded in quarter tone tuning, splicing garage rock and Middle Eastern music.

## 3. Best For The True Gizzard Head



Paper Mâché Dream Balloon (2015) Their least electric album leans on folk and acoustic sounds, resulting in an album that shows off their ear for melodies and everything pastoral.

## 4. Best To Rock Out And Boogie To




Polygondwanaland (2017) A seamless whole of a record that opens on a 10-minute instrumental and invites listeners on a playful trip beyond space and time.

## 5. Best To Jazz It Out With Sketches Of Brunswick East (2017)



Its title inspired by Miles Davis's Sketches Of Spain, this is King Gizzard exploring the changes in their city, Melbourne, over a jazzy, funk-laden collection.



A full-page photograph of Mary Wilson standing outdoors in a lush garden. She is wearing a long, black, off-the-shoulder gown with a wide, ruffled collar. She has her arms outstretched to the sides and is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is wearing a wide, beaded necklace and a bracelet on her left wrist. The background features large palm trees and green foliage. The lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

**“Motown said  
The Supremes  
were diamonds  
in the rough  
and that they  
were just there  
to shine us up.  
And shine us  
up they did!”**

“Ta-dah!” Mary Wilson – likes  
fame, hates dirty lugholes.



# Mary Wilson

The Supremes soul legend's golden rules for living.

## 1 WORK AT WHAT YOU LIKE TO DO

Not everyone is lucky enough to be rich and famous. Most of us have to work and pay the bills, so try and find what you're good at and like to do. If that's not possible, try several things so if one falls through you have another chance. The Supremes would've gone into higher education if we hadn't had our first Number 1 hit record with [1964's] *Where Did Our Love Go*. Thank God [Motown songwriters] Holland-Dozier-Holland came through with that. But luck is not always on your side, so finding what you're good at is key to being happy as well as making a living.

## 2 RESPECT LIFE

To me, life has always been special. As a young child I would always look out our front window and gaze at the clouds and stars in the sky. It was all so beautiful and far away yet I still felt connected. Even today, at 75 years young, I still look at the trees and flowers and talk to the birds that are outside my window. Life is a gift because it is a miracle, so you should respect it.

## 3 CLEAN BEHIND YOUR EARS

This is one of my less philosophical choices, but I like it because it's true! Always keep your gut clean. Meaning... I won't explain that one! And also always clean your ears, because sometimes if you wear glasses and take them off they smell really horrible because behind the ears it's very dirty. Sometimes people forget to clean behind the ears, especially guys! Now, ladies, I never go to bed with my make-up on. This is crucial because your skin is a beautiful thing so take care of it. And drink lots of water. I live in a desert in Las Vegas so water for me is extremely important to keep my skin looking beautiful.

## 4 LEARN FROM YOUR MOTHER

The best advice I've heard from someone else is from my mother, Johnnie Mae. Not so much what she said, but how she lived her life. My mother couldn't read or write, she was poor and uneducated, but she was the best inspiration for me in terms of looking at the world as a beautiful place. I was actually raised by an angel! I don't think I ever saw her mad at anyone. Maybe she got angry at us kids if we stayed out too late and then we'd get a spanking. Haha!

## 5 DREAMS DO COME TRUE

When we were in The Supremes, me, Flo [Ballard] and Diana [Ross] dared to dream. When that dream came true, becoming famous at the age of 20, it was for me like a fairy tale had come true. Even after 60 years I'm still totally happy about the fame. But I have had things happen to me which could've broken me: my son died in a car accident at the age of 14, I had an abusive marriage, and when Florence died that broke my heart. But, for some reason, I've always been able to get back up, and I think that's thanks to my mom.

## 6 ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE TRUTH

The Temptations' song *Beauty Is Only Skin Deep* is a truth that I have learned which also says a lot about seeing the truth in *all* things. I've always tried to see what was behind something. I would spend hours before falling to sleep analysing something. I ask: "Who am I? Why did I do some of the things I've done in my life? Do they make me a good or bad person?" I've found that the answer is always be truthful to yourself.

## 7 LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

My intentions have always been to enjoy life and love everyone. However, there have been a few people I have come across in life and no matter how hard I tried, I still could not forgive them for the hurt I felt had been done to me. But as I've grown I've realised it was not me they were trying to hurt, it was just them being them. People's own hurt can stop them from loving someone. So love your neighbour, including family and friends, but also learn to love yourself.


## 8 GIVE THANKS TO YOUR TEACHERS

I've been blessed to have had so many teachers who have put me on the right track and I give thanks to them all. I was never an A student, but from kindergarten through to High School I was always chosen to be in the school's choirs and now I am a famous singer because they gave me the idea. Then, of course, there was Berry Gordy at Motown who took a chance on us. And all our mentors at Motown who said we were diamonds in the rough and that they were just there to shine us up. And shine us up they did!

## 9 DON'T LET FAILURE STOP YOU

Failure can stop you in your tracks. Fear is one of those emotions that sets up roadblocks you don't even know are there. I fell off my bicycle when I was nine years old so I find it hard to ride a bike now. But I am facing things now to overcome old fears which stop me from moving ahead in this life. I'm still working on this.

## 10 SLOW DOWN AND SMELL THE ROSES

I've been almost 60 years in showbusiness and I've never thought of retiring. I'm having so much fun writing books and acting so I don't wanna stop. However, I would like to slow down and smell the roses. I've been to all these great exotic countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan and China and it would be good to keep travelling to more places. I love to travel, but to do it more as a tourist. So I'd like to slow down and, obviously, make more money! Haha. 

■ *Hitsville: The Making Of Motown* is in cinemas from 30 September and the film soundtrack is out now. *Mary Wilson's Supreme Glamour* (Thames & Hudson) is also out now.



You can't keep a good  
man down: Edwyn Collins,  
London, August, 2019.





# EDWYN COLLINS

**Contrary, romantic and arty, **Edwyn Collins** defined the sound of '80s independent music with **Orange Juice**. He would develop into a master song craftsman, until he was struck down by two massive, life-changing strokes. **Tom Doyle** meets him and his wife **Grace Maxwell** to hear about the long trek back to the top of the pile.**

E

very day when he's in record-making mode, Edwyn Collins picks up his silver-topped walking cane and climbs the 115 steps to his Clashnarrow Studio, situated in two purpose-designed, zinc-clad structures atop a hill near Helmsdale in the far North-East of Scotland. Through the studio's huge, near floor-to-ceiling windows,

he can watch the changing weather patterns over the North Sea.

It's particularly significant that the former Orange Juice singer has chosen to work in a location with such a demanding daily commute, given the fact that 14 years ago, he suffered two strokes that might have killed him, but instead forced him to slowly learn to talk and walk again, leaving him with impaired speech and movement that is improving month by month, year by year. But Edwyn

Collins has always been a determined soul. Other days he pads down to the nearby village and back, down to the shoreline and back.

"Walking every day, up a steep hill, it's good for me," he says. "Fresh air and paradise."

The title of his latest, ninth and brilliant solo album, *Badbea* (pronounced Badbay), adopts the name of the abandoned clifftop village, five miles north, once inhabited by crofters thrown off their land during the Highland Clearances in the 18th century. >>



The peel sessions: Orange Juice (from left, James Kirk, Edwyn Collins, David McClymont and Steve Daly), London, 1981; (below) 1982 Top 10 hit, Rip It Up.



“I was shy and arrogant at the same time. But I had drive.”

From the age of eight, Collins had been a frequent visitor to Helmsdale, as it was where his grandfather lived. When his grandad died, the singer inherited his home there, building Clashnarrow Studio on the land lying above it over the past five years.

The area holds other key memories for him. Back in the late '70s, walking on nearby Lough Beach, he experienced something of an epiphany that was to change his life and kickstart his career in music. He'd formed his first band, the Nu-Sonics, but he knew they weren't much cop. Today, he remembers the first song he wrote for them.

“Ready Steady Go. [Sings] ‘Ready steady go go go, ready steady go...’” He erupts into his bassy, staccato belly-laugh. “Complete shit. I was 17 years old and I realised, ‘It’s no good, the group the Nu-Sonics. I’ll call it... I know... Orange Juice.’”

“My songs are no good,” I thought. ‘I’ve got to do something about this. It’s not a good enough standard. It’s got to be better than this.’ Along the beach, I wrote Falling And Laughing and the rest is history.”

Falling And Laughing was to become the first Orange Juice single properly released on the tiny, pioneering Postcard record label Collins formed with partner Alan Horne. From that day to now, aside from the odd period of (often troublesome) support from a major record company, Edwyn Collins has remained entirely independent.

**S**ix hundred miles south from Helmsdale, on a summertime Sunday afternoon, a grinning Edwyn Collins shuffles into a Kensal Green gastropub with his partner of 35 years, Grace Maxwell, who both manages him and doggedly helped to rebuild him. Given the traumas the couple have endured, it’s heartening that they remain something of a comedy duo, given to mutual pissing banter.

In recent years, Maxwell has usually accompanied Collins to interviews, filling the gaps in his sometimes faltering speech. This writer has met the singer various times, pre- and post-strokes, and today he’s noticeably on his best form for years, to the point where Maxwell asks – though it proves impossible – if I can edit out her comments. Collins, with the typical bluntness he’s always employed, relays the conversation the pair had just before their arrival.

“Crossing the road,” he beams, “Grace said, ‘I need to shut up now...’”

Collins is happy to have relocated from London to Scotland, but we’ve clearly caught them on the tail end of a lively discussion about this.

“I did not make you move to Helmsdale,” Maxwell laughs. “I didn’t...”

“You’re bossy, Grace,” says Collins.

“I mean, c’mon...” Maxwell protests. “Cos it makes me seem like I’m sort of a...”

“Fascist dictator?” the singer cuts in, before erupting into his hiccupping laughter. “Only joking...”

“You ungrateful wretch,” Maxwell hoots.

We scan the menu – Collins and Q choose the roast chicken, Maxwell the pork belly – and talk naturally turns to the young Edwyn, born in Edinburgh 59 years ago (he’ll turn 60 a few weeks after our interview). His parents having met at art school, with his father going on to work as an art lecturer, it was perhaps inevitable that Collins would become, as he remembers, “obsessed with drawing” as a kid. At two, or possibly three, he colour-pencilled a road scene that impressed his father. “My dad said to me, ‘What’s that on the side of the road?’” he recalls. “I said, ‘Oil.’ The iridescent colours.”

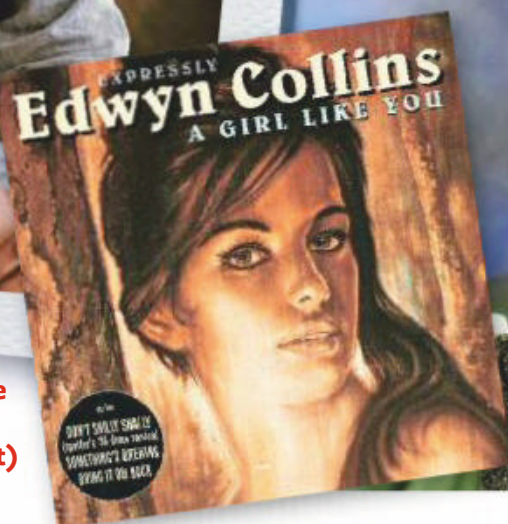
Although art would remain a lifelong passion, Collins’s main obsession became music. Living in Dundee, aged 15, he saw Sparks play a 1974 gig at the city’s Caird Hall and he was forever changed. At 16, he sold his stamp collection to buy a Burns Nu-Sonic electric guitar (hence the name of his first group). Mutating into Orange Juice, and on a mission to give the wristy funk of Chic a post-punk edge, they initially met strong resistance from Scottish audiences.

“They’d shout, ‘Poofs! Poofs! Poofs! Poofs!’” he loudly exclaims, turning the heads of some of our fellow diners. “Onstage





**Rip it up and start again: (above) Orange Juice slim down to a duo, with Collins and drummer Zeke Manyika, 1985; (right) 1994's comeback hit, A Girl Like You.**



**Upwards and onwards: Collins defies the odds, playing the Meltdown Festival, London, 2014.**

I'd just go [*campily puts his hand on his hip*]. It worked!"

In Glasgow To London, one of the standout tracks on *Badbea*, Collins remembers the heady thrills of the days when Orange Juice were beginning to take off – including the moment when presenter Janet Street-Porter and a London Weekend Television camera crew met them off the train and they really felt they'd "arrived" as a band. In the lyric, Collins confesses that back then, "ambition drove my life", but that these days he "couldn't give a fuck".

He laughs and laughs. "Maybe I was shy and arrogant at the same time," he reflects of his younger self. "But I had drive."

Soon after beginning to license their recordings to Polydor Records, the original line-up of Orange Juice fractured, due to what Collins cites as lack of commitment from guitarist James Kirk and drummer Steven Daly. "I was obsessed with cracking on," he says. "Where are you, guys? I need you."

So, he kicked them out?

"Basically. I shouldn't have done that, but... well, lots of people split up bands."

In 1982, Orange Juice Mark II scored a Number 8 hit with the bubbling funk of *Rip It Up*, making it to Top Of The Pops. Did he feel entirely comfortable with his pop star status?

"Yeah, I did," he grins. "Excited as well. Afterwards, [*TOTP presenter*] Jimmy Savile said, 'Now then, now then, Edwyn' [*laughs*]."

By the time of their fourth album, *The Orange Juice* in 1984, the line-up had reduced to the duo of Collins and drummer Zeke

Manyika and their commercial fortunes were dwindling. The pair celebrated the latter fact in fine style with a self-funded TV ad campaign for the record that namechecked its singles, as the message "Flop!!" flashed up on the screen. "It was just a wind-up," he shrugs.

Understandably, the people at Polydor were unimpressed and the relationship soured. Today, Maxwell recalls the final, fateful meeting at the label, where they were trying to hide the fact that the Rhodesian-born Manyika had illegally overstayed his UK student visa and so was unable to tour overseas.

"Edwyn thought they were all numpties at Polydor and he didn't hide it a lot of the time," she says. "This guy there goes, 'The bottom line is, Edwyn, if you don't tour in Europe, you're not going to have a career.' Edwyn leans across his desk and goes, 'Listen, mate, don't fucking bottom line me...'"

"And I quickly realised," adds the singer, "no more Polydor for me."



**Right-hand woman: with wife and manager, Grace Maxwell.**

In the decade that followed, Edwyn Collins found it hard to reignite his career, having pissed off plenty of industry figures through his non-compliant attitude and mischief-making. Then, in the early '90s, he began to rebuild his autonomy by buying up vintage recording equipment and founding a studio near Alexandra Palace in North London. After a year, and 48 hours before his lease ran out, he began work on a dementedly catchy, Northern soul-flavoured track, *A Girl Like You*, featuring a distinctively fizzy guitar riff.

Collins and Maxwell began licensing the song to different record companies all around the globe, with *A Girl Like You*, as the latter puts it, becoming "entirely a force of its own." Maxwell rented an office and roped in her sister to help with the sudden surge in demand for the track.

"Remember faxes?" Collins wonders. "They were spewing out from all over the world."

"The carpet would be papered in faxes in the morning," Maxwell recalls. "Nightmare. It was exciting, but it was also quite knackered. The UK was the last place to pick up on it because the UK was the place where you had a reputation. [*Edwyn guffaws*] And the reputation was Edwyn Collins Doesn't Have Hits."

Collins heavily promoted the track, and its 1994 parent album *Gorgeous George*, everywhere from Britain to Australia, performing on naff TV shows and exhausting himself in the year-and-a-half- >>



long process. For the couple, though, the success of *A Girl Like You* resulted in a massive cash injection, even if, as indie operators learning the game as they went along, they knew they were sometimes being ripped off. Maxwell remembers their record company in the Philippines being the worst...

"Well, it was gangsters, wasn't it?" she notes, as Collins nods in agreement. "You'd never see any money. There was a lot of places you'd never see any money from. Somebody would've made money out of it in these places but it wouldn't be us."

"I mean we weren't obsessed with money," she stresses, "and never have been. But to find ourselves with the potential to do things, with the worry lifted off us... We were living in a one-bedroom flat which was rented from a housing co-op."

*A Girl Like You* became something of a modern standard, covered by everyone from Rod Stewart to Rolf Harris. Today the pair slightly lament the fact that a planned mash-up of the song with Foreigner's *Waiting For A Girl Like You*, put together by the management of Shakin' Stevens for their charge to perform, never saw the light of day.

"It was not bad..." Collins notes, with a wry smile.

"It was brilliantly shit," Maxwell points out. "We did approve it, but Foreigner didn't. Miserable, torn-faced Foreigner."

In the years that followed, Collins and Maxwell continued to build their indie empire, licensing the former's master tapes to labels. Then, entirely out of nowhere, on 18 February 2005, Collins started feeling ill, initially putting it down to food poisoning. His subsequent two cerebral haemorrhages – one at home, the second in hospital – followed within the next seven days.

"Six months in hospital and I couldn't say a thing, apart from 'Grace Maxwell' over and over and over again," he explains.

In those first months of his long recovery, Collins couldn't face listening to music. Then, one day Maxwell brought into the hospital a mix CD that, pre-illness, Edwyn had put together to listen to in the car. The opening track, he remembers today, was Johnnie Allan's version of Chuck Berry's *Promised Land*.

"I had headphones on and I burst out crying. It was affecting me, big time. The

second song was Ringo Starr, *Photograph*. And yet again I burst out crying."

"Uncontrollable sobbing," says Maxwell. "To see the effect that it had. Just completely overwhelming you, wasn't it?"

"It consumed me," says Collins.

It was a huge breakthrough moment, reconnecting the damaged Edwyn Collins with the core of who he was and who he remains: a music obsessive.

"It was a massive relief," says Maxwell, "because I thought, 'He's not lost the power of music to affect him. If it can have this effect on him, all will be well.'"

**O**n one trip home from hospital, around a week before he was discharged, Edwyn Collins began singing in the car: "I'm searching for the truth/Some sweet day we'll get there in the end."

"Grace told me, 'You're taking the piss,'" he remembers.

"I thought it was, like, a silly song or something," she explains in her defence.

The song *Searching For The Truth* wouldn't be released for another five years, but it was the first proof that Collins's songwriting abilities hadn't been lost. Even among the tracks that he had written and recorded before his strokes – subsequently completed and released as the *Home Again* album in 2007 – there now sounded as if there had been lyrical premonitions. Not least in the title track with its opening lines, "I'm home again/Hardly certain of my role."

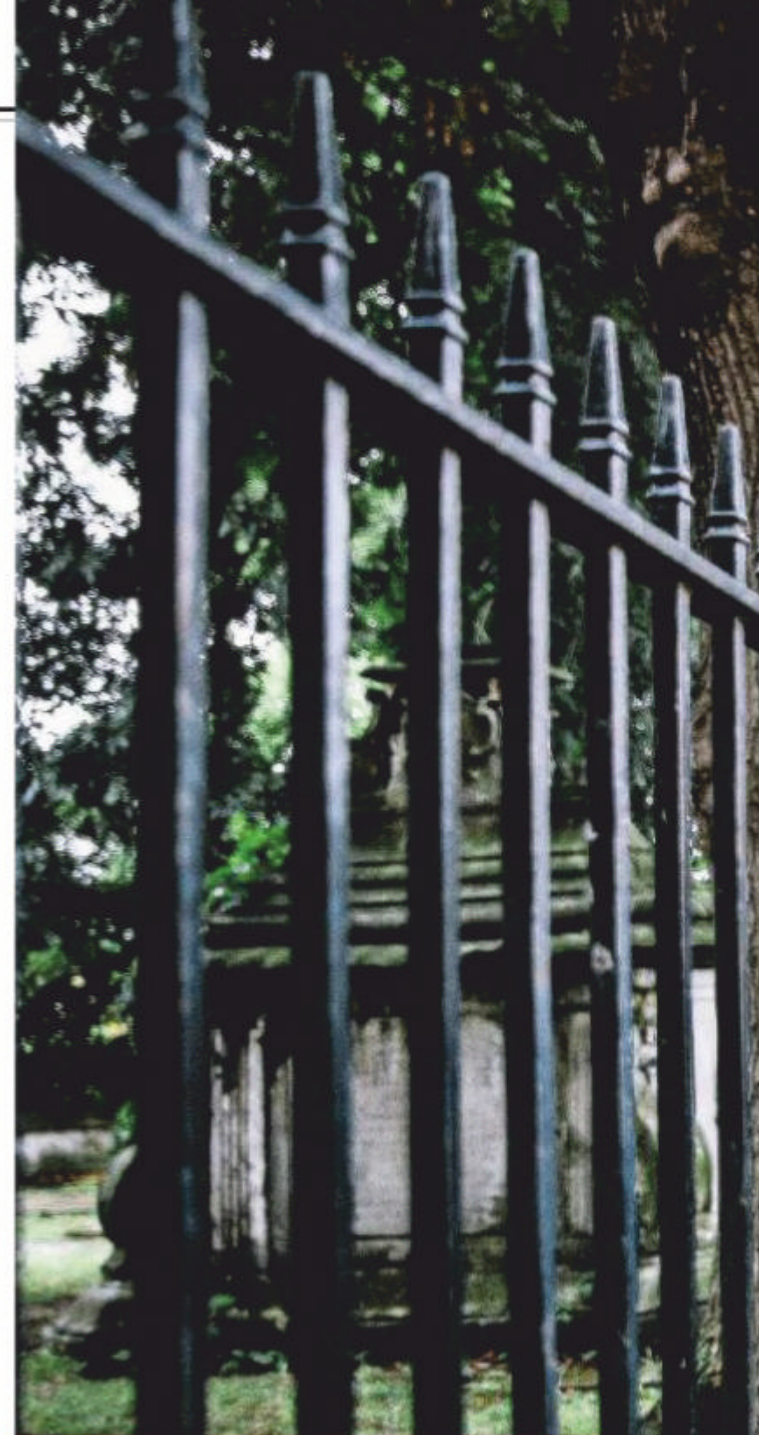
"That's so strange," says Maxwell. "The whole of that *Home Again* album, there's so many things on it to me that sort of almost presage Edwyn's illness."

Remarkably, in October 2007, Edwyn Collins returned to the stage, performing at Dingwalls in Camden, with his onetime Postcard Records labelmate Roddy Frame of Aztec Camera filling in for him on guitar. It was a highly emotionally charged night.

"I wanted to do it and I was nervous," he recalls. "But Grace was even more nervous."

"I was scared as anything," she admits. "I thought, 'This'll be my fault if it all goes horribly wrong. I shouldn't push him into this.'"

"By the third song," Collins remembers,



"Six months in hospital and I couldn't say a thing apart from 'Grace Maxwell' over and over and over again."

"onstage I said, 'I'm beginning to enjoy it.'"

Since then, Edwyn Collins has toured on and off down the years, and is currently preparing to go back out on the road in September. But are there different challenges in touring for him these days?

"No," he states, instantly.

"There are for me!" laughs Maxwell.

"I'm kind of like his... what is it? Y'know how Prince Charles has got a valet? That's

## The Best Of EDWYN COLLINS

From the wonky, handmade charm of *Orange Juice* via a mid-period resurgence to the blissful present day.

**1 Falling And Laughing Single** (1980)  
Sounding like Television brought up on fish suppers and Irn-Bru, *Orange Juice*'s debut was handmade, edgy and mysteriously wonky pop.

**2 Poor Old Soul, Pt. 2 Single** (1981)  
Higher production values and the pinnacle of *Orange Juice* MK I's fidgety indie-funk. Contains the brilliant chant, "No more rock'n'roll for you."

**3 Rip It Up Rip It Up** (1982)  
Squelchy synth bass, a head nod groove, Nile Rodgers-cribbed guitar riffs and a lovelorn lyric conspire brilliantly to create Edwyn Collins's first Top 10 hit.

**4 What Presence?! The Orange Juice** (1984)  
Collins's formative Lou Reed and David Bowie influences resurface in this slinky epic with its stop-start arrangement and dramatic twists and turns.





**Standing proud:**  
Collins steps  
into the future,  
Clapham, London,  
August, 2019.

my job. One of the many.”

More significantly, perhaps, nearly 40 years on from his first release on Postcard, and now with his own recording studio and label, AED Records, Edwyn Collins has maintained his independence. “Well, apart from Grace!” he howls.

Fourteen years on from his illness, has Collins surprised himself with his resilience? Or was he always naturally resilient?

“I don’t know,” he deliberates, before thinking harder. “Yes. I was. Yeah. Determined, I suppose. I took it slowly and

gradually I’ve done better and better.”


“He’s got an ability to just not look left or right,” Maxwell reckons. “Just tunnel into where his thinking is going and not worry.”

There’s a beautiful acoustic ballad on Badbea entitled *It All Makes Sense To Me*. It’s the sound of a man at peace with himself, living utterly in the wonder of the moment.

“Sometimes Edwyn will just be wandering about,” says Maxwell, “and he’ll go, ‘Oh!’ Like he’s been hit in the solar plexus. And I get caught out and I’ll say, ‘What? What?’ And he goes, ‘Oh, suddenly I’m just so happy.’ A great

big whoosh of joy hits him about being alive. Every now and again, we get a moment where we just go, ‘Wow, we’re here.’”

“We did it,” Collins laughs. “Me and Grace. We did it.”

They certainly did. As physical and musical recoveries go, Edwyn Collins’s one is nothing short of miraculous – 115 steps, all the way back up. 

■ Edwyn Collins will be performing live at the Q Awards on 16 October. Go to page 15 for ticket information or visit [Qthemusic.com](http://Qthemusic.com).

## 5 **You’re Better Than You Know** **Hope And Despair**

(1989)  
Part Al Green, part Roy Orbison, this career dip showstopper offers words of cheer to the doubt-filled listener, or possibly, to himself.

## 6 **A Girl Like You** **Gorgeous George**

(1994)  
The worldwide hit that changed it all for Collins. Its guitar sound – copied since, but never equalled – was created using a 20 quid B&M fuzz pedal.

## 7 **Home Again** **Home Again**

(2007)  
Written before the singer’s illness, but eerily prescient about the circumstances he’d find himself in when it was released, *Home Again* is his most poignant ballad.

## 8 **Searching For The Truth** **Losing Sleep**

(2010)  
The first song that magically came to Collins, post-illness. A folksy country tune that could also double as a long-lost gospel hymn.

## 9 **I Guess We** **Were Young**

(2019)  
“Splitting up, too many fights,” sings a reflective Edwyn, looking back on a youthful romance and the break-up of Orange Juice.

## 10 **It All Makes** **Sense To Me**

(2019)  
Ushered in by birdsong recorded outside Clashnarrow Studio, an inspirational ballad par excellence: “It’s a glorious day in this world/Yes it is.”



**The weekly podcast from the makers of Q magazine**



**A weekly, hour-long, loving interrogation of a musical titan.**

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# Q Review

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST & BEST MUSIC GUIDE

EDITED BY CHRIS CATCHPOLE

## 106 FOALS

Finally, the wait is over for Part 2 of the quartet's magnum opus. But is it any cop?



## 109 ANGEL OLSEN

There's blood on the tracks with the singer's stunning fourth album.



## 110 DANNY BROWN

The rejuvenated rap radical makes his best album yet.



### HOW WE REVIEW

The Q Review is the definitive music guide. Its hand-picked writers are the undisputed experts in their fields, and they rigorously adhere to Q's world-famous star-rating system.



#### CLASSIC

This is a work of genius. Essential for any collection.



#### GOOD

Solid as a rock. You will not be let down.



#### FAIR

A decent attempt, but not ripe. Investigate at your own peril.



#### POOR

Ill-conceived, under-cooked. Please return to the drawing board.



#### RUBBISH

This will boil your blood with fury and disgust.



# THE BRITISH INVASION

**They might not get the references to Phil Mitchell and Ribena, but LA falls head over heels for Northampton MC's sweat-soaked bedlam.**

## SLOWTHAI

LODGE ROOM, LOS ANGELES

4 SEPTEMBER, 2019

★★★★

**I**nside LA's lavish Lodge Room chandeliers hang from an ornate ceiling, gilt stucco glints from every corner and delicate trompe l'oeils do their best to make you believe there's a classical Grecian scene in the distance behind the DJ decks. It feels more like Jay Gatsby's smoking

lounge than the setting for an hour of endless swirling circle pits, yet tonight this 1920s Masonic temple will be rattled to its fancy foundations by Northampton's rowdiest son, slowthai.

This isn't the man also known as Tyron Frampton's first visit to America, but it's the twinkly-eyed 24-year-old MC's most hyped run of US shows so far, following his limelight-grabbing guest spot on *Ginger*, the latest LP from the golden boys of Gen Z rap, Brockhampton. The timing of the tour is strangely appropriate too, as back home the

Brexit balls-up that inspired so much of his thrilling debut *Nothing Great About Britain* falls further into chaos under the direction of Boris Johnson. It's comforting to know that if the world is watching, then at least we've got artists like slowthai out there telling another side of the story.

Following a frantic warm-up from DJ, producer and extremely enthusiastic hypeman Kwes Darko – a man who wears a bucket hat with as much effortless panache as Ian Brown in his prime – Frampton rockets onto the stage. Like a sprung coil, >>



**“Am I in the middle of an underwear anxiety dream?”: slowthai keeps things casual, Lodge Room, LA, 2019.**



RACHEL WRIGHT





it's as if he's bottled up all his energy since his last gig at Leeds Festival and is now furiously unleashing every last drip through fiery bars about ASBOs, Ayia Napa and the EDL. The moody call to arms that is the album's title track is roared back at him by an audience that grew up on Odd Future rather than EastEnders, but even though the Phil Mitchell references might go over their heads, this largely teenage crowd still fully understand the fury and frustration that Frampton is putting out there. A lewd dig at the

Queen that could come under the definition of borderline treason signals the track's end, but he's also more than happy to adjust his political geography for the sake of this evening's location.

"We hold the fucking power and all them other c\*\*ts like Donald Trump are fucking wankers and they can suck my dick," he yells to cheers. As firebrand oratory goes it's not quite the Gettysburg Address, but it more than serves its purpose. He's met with whoops and cheers, then

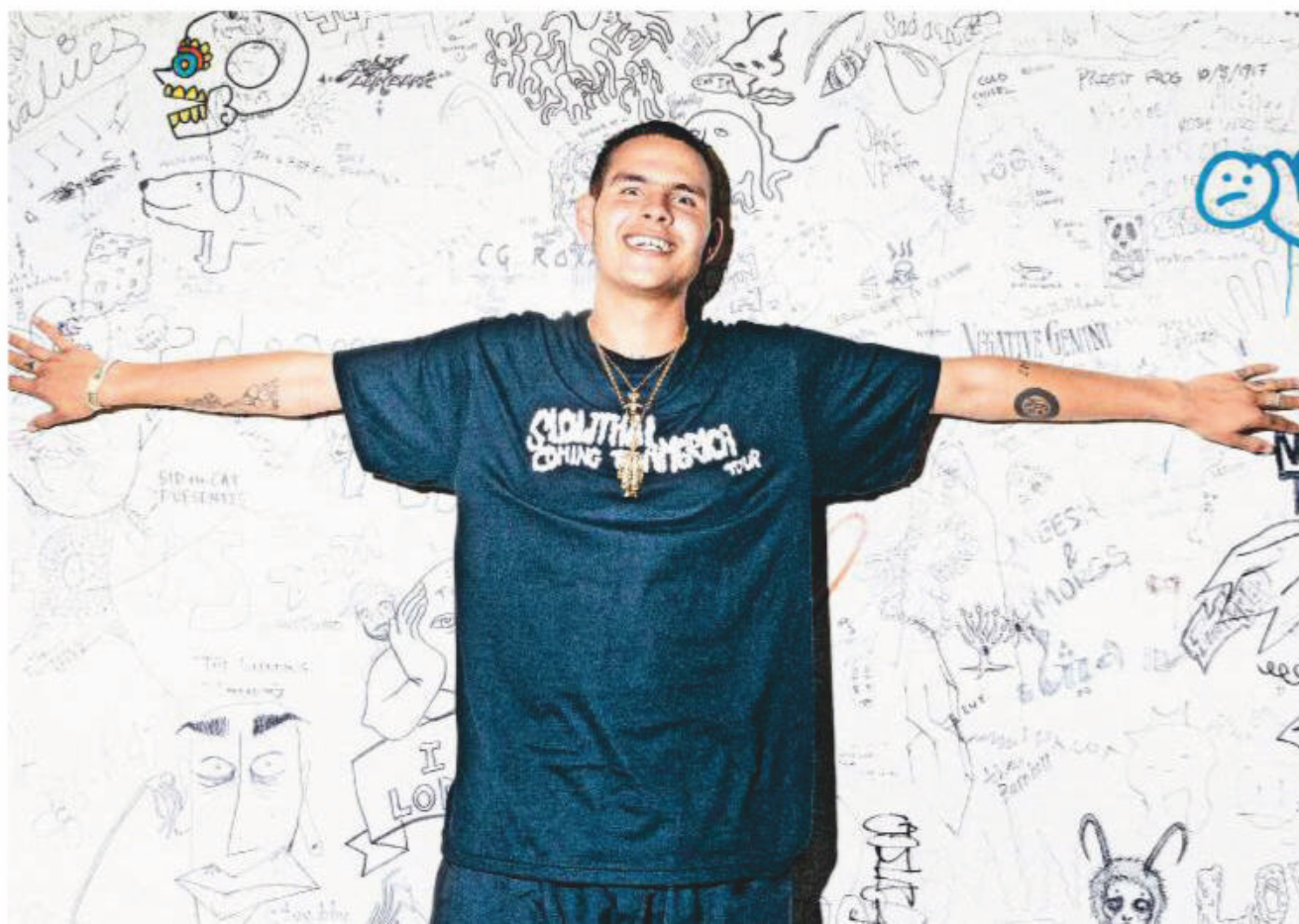
**Prick up your ears: (above) slowthai, with producer Sammo, aka Woioii The Crack Rabbit; (below) Northampton's finest in a rare clothed moment.**

ceremoniously peels off his slowthai T-shirt, revealing a chest and arms covered in scribbled tattoos; half man, half high school exercise book. "I hate wearing clothing," he drawls like a grumpy toddler who's yet again lost their socks. "It's fucking boring."

A self-confessed pints-and-peanuts person, you'd have thought that slowthai's whole vibe would sit in stark contrast to LA's über-healthy kale-and-kombucha scene, but during this trip he has been taking advantage of another natural California product.

"I've been smoking a ridiculous amount of weed," admits Frampton, sunk into a sofa before the show. "That's my favourite thing, chilling and smoking and being blazed out of my mind," he adds, going on to say that he's been getting into cosmic jazz guru Sun Ra and NYC disco punk pioneers ESG while working on ideas for his second album. It might be 100 degrees in the shade, but Frampton's herbally induced chill is a powerful one. Unfazed by the brutal weather, he's also super-Zen about his recent decision to pull out of his support slot on Liam Gallagher's UK arena tour to instead accompany Brockhampton on the road in the US.

"It's always been a dream of mine to even meet Liam, so it was heartbreaking to do that," he explains to Q. "I didn't want it to be like I was





**“Cheese!”: slowthai takes a selfie with the crowd, LA, 4 September, 2019.**



## SETLIST

Nothing  
Great About  
Britain  
—  
Drug Dealer  
—  
GTFOMF  
—  
Crack  
—  
Doorman  
—  
Peace Of Mind  
—  
North Nights  
—  
Mayday  
—  
Why You Wet  
—  
T N Biscuits  
—  
Psycho  
—  
Ladies

messing everything up, but I gotta think of the grand scheme of things... it made a lot of sense.” Gallagher was amiable about the whole thing too, wishing slowthai well over Twitter, writing, “I still love ya, homeboy,” before then swiftly booking the far more Parka Monkey-friendly Gerry Cinnamon in his place.

It’s true that some of the things that happen tonight might well have baffled Gallagher’s trad lad crowd, not least the appearance of Woioii The Crack Rabbit, a sinister handmade bunny mask with glowing red eyes which appears atop the head of Frampton’s mate and producer Sammo. The rabbit, which also has its own Instagram account, is supposed to be a metaphor for Frampton’s struggle with addiction, but it’s also just a bit of a weird, surreal laugh too. “I felt like I’ve been going down a rabbit hole my whole life,” he tells the crowd as his furry friend skanks to the floor-shaking bass of Crack, constantly on the verge of hitting the deck. “But the truth is no

matter how many drugs you take they don’t take the pain away.” If this is meant as a serious moment it doesn’t last long, because as soon as the bunny has left the stage, Frampton and Darko are pinballing around at high speed, weaving past each other during the murky North Nights, throwing out niche references to cult British institutions, from Cash In The Attic to Ribena. The rabbit returns for the thundering album highlight Doorman, ducking and diving between Frampton and Darko. As pure mayhem descends, slowthai’s official photographer seems unsure if he should take pictures of the action or just flail about like the second coming of Bez. He opts for the latter.

The whole affair looks supremely knackered and with a heady concoction of brandy, weed and some vegan food “that really fucked me up” running through his system, slowthai dials things down for the moody Peace Of Mind. It’s here that you can feel the deep melancholy of one of Frampton’s more unlikely influences, Elliott

Smith. He’s not quite the ultra-sensitive “softboi” cliché that’s emerged in recent years, but Frampton’s willingness to engage with his emotions is a compelling thing, as is the song’s reflective refrain of, “I feel peace of mind/When I’m dreaming of a life I ain’t living.” But before you know it, he’s smirking again, crowd-surfing in nothing but his slowthai-branded boxers before splitting the crowd into two and getting them to yell, “Fuck!” and “Donald!” while beaming.

This extreme cheekiness is all part of his appeal. slowthai might be rapping about ketamine, calling the President a fat twat and the Queen a c\*\*t, but somehow he manages to maintain a certain innocence. Every profanity comes with a giggle and a wink. He’s as adorable as he is rude and as he finishes the show with a selfie, imploring everyone in the audience to get into the back of the shot so they’re right there with him. “I look alright, you know!” he announces as he looks at the photo, offering up some advice on self-esteem. “Always love yourself before you love anyone else,” he says, before another cheeky chuckle, heading offstage with a smile as big as his personality. It’s a message anyone can take comfort in, no matter what side of the Atlantic you grew up on. **LEONIE COOPER**

**slowthai might be rapping about ketamine and calling the Queen a c\*\*t, but somehow he manages to maintain a certain innocence.**



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# WILD HORSES

**Oxford quartet's bold and adventurous second helping.**



## FOALS

### EVERYTHING NOT SAVED WILL BE LOST – PART 2

WARNERS, OUT 18 OCTOBER

Never let it be said that Foals singer Yannis Philippakis is one to underestimate his own band's genius. "One of the things that we feel that we've struggled with before is that our creative desire and ambition has not been able to be conveyed on a 40-minute, 10-track album," said Philippakis earlier this year, to which a million other bands replied, "Well, we manage."

The solution to this head-scratching artistic conundrum was for these serious young(ish) men to abandon the idea of releasing one 40-minute, 10-track album and instead put out two of them within the space of seven months. The first of these, the admittedly impressive *Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost – Part 1*, came out in March, and found the Oxford band in experimental mode, featuring excursions into everything from indie disco-friendly

house to '80s-inspired Talking Heads-style art-funk.

Half-a-year later, we arrive at this no less assured follow-up. If *Part 1* was an expansion, then this companion piece is a logical contraction. It's been pitched as a big, riff-driven rock record, which makes it sound like Foals have suddenly decided to start jostling for position with Nickelback. And it does indeed lay the guitars on thicker and grimmer than ever before, and that includes the super-sized arena art-rock of 2015's *What Went Down*. It's an approach showcased on the punky *Black Bull*, which finds a raw-throated Philippakis howling, whooping and letting loose with the odd unexpected Neanderthal grunt.

Even when they're not acting out their earthier impulses, Foals still favour directness this time around. The fuzzy and propulsively funky *The Runner* wastes no time sliding to the centre of the floor to show off its moves, chucking in a proper old-school air guitar-friendly solo to cap it all off. The thumping *Like Lightning* is even less bothered with vague notions

of "cool": strip away the tricky production and you're left with the closest thing to a straight-ahead arena-rock chorus that they have ever served up.

But this is Foals we're talking about, and brains will always win out over brawn. If the first album cast a pessimistic eye over the chaos of the world today, here they seem to be addressing an aftermath of some sort. There's certainly a post-apocalyptic calmness at the centre of *10,000 Feet*, which finds Philippakis imagining drifting upwards "through the sky to the infra-red", watching cool green water retake the land beneath him. The song concludes with the sound of sampled wildlife, suggesting that nature will always find a way to heal itself.

The album, and the project, ends musically and philosophically with the 10-minute *Neptune*, a billowing hymn to the inevitable triumph of the order of nature, whose length belies its grace. It's a fitting conclusion to an ambitious endeavour, one that underlines why its creators have continued to prosper long after so many of their late-'00s contemporaries have been lost to the waves. Individually and collectively, the two parts of *Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost* aren't quite the work of radical genius that Foals probably think they are, but they're bolder and more adventurous than a lot of those million other bands could manage. ★★★★★  
DAVE EVERLEY

**Listen To:** *The Runner* | *10,000 Feet* | *Neptune*

**With Foals,  
brains  
will always  
win out  
over brawn.**

## First Among Sequels Three more albums recorded as part of a pair.



### Radiohead Amnesiac

(2001)  
Also known as  
Kid A, Part 2, at

least unofficially. This was recorded during the same sessions and shared much of that album's turn-of-the-millennium angst. ★★★★★



### Kid Cudi Man On The Moon II: The Legend Of Mr Rager

(2010)

The rapper followed up his critically acclaimed 2009 debut with this darker, more experimental sequel, recorded during the same period. ★★★★★



### Guns N' Roses Use Your Illusion Pt 1 & 2

(1991)

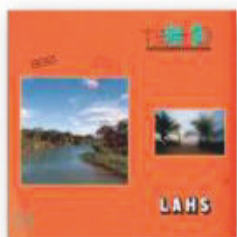
Axl Rose and co set the gold standard in early-'90s rock hubris – with not just two albums released on the same day, but two double albums released on the same day. ★★★★★



**“You can have a go on the chair tomorrow, lads”:  
Yannis Philippakis and co  
don’t disappoint on Part 2.**







## ALLAH-LAS

LAHS

MEXICAN SUMMER, OUT 11 OCTOBER

**West Coast '60s fetishists broaden their horizons. A bit.**

Having been formed by employees of famed LA record store Amoeba Records in 2008, over three albums Allah-Las have specialised in tastefully assembled reproductions of '60s psych rock. For fourth album, LAHS, they've broadened their palette to include shades of Tropicália, Krautrock and even a bit of disco. As with a lot of their work it can occasionally lack bite, some fire in their impeccably tasteful bellies. The best moments by far come when they push the template into more eccentric territory – the slip-sliding Portuguese freak folk of Prazer Em Te Conhecer, Keeping Dry's skewed country rock or Royal Blues, where The Velvet Underground's more hushed moments bounce into childlike Japanese pop. ★★ ★

CHRIS CATCHPOLE

**Listen To:** Royal Blues | Prazer Em Te Conhecer | Keeping Dry



## JOE ARMON-JONES

TURN TO CLEAR VIEW

BROWNSWOOD, OUT NOW

**Quickfire follow-up for Ezra Collective keyboard wizard.**

As keyboard player in Ezra Collective, Joe Armon-Jones is at the heart of that band's twists and turns down the side streets of London jazz. But there's more to his sound than that. While last year's debut, Starting Today, touched on dub, this follow-up offers guests such as left-field whirl-of-activity Georgia Anne Muldrow on the supreme Yellow Dandelion, as well as playful Afrobeat vocalist Obongjayar. The Leo & Aquarius features Armon-Jones's own understated vocals and a rare guest rap from Jehst outside UK hip-hop's cloistered scene. If the instrumentals can occasionally feel a little lounge-comfy, Turn To Clear View is ample proof of why UK jazz's horizons keep expanding. ★★ ★ ★

STEVE YATES

**Listen To:** Yellow Dandelion | (To Know) Where You're Coming From | The Leo & Aquarius



## BATTLES

JUICE B CRYPTS

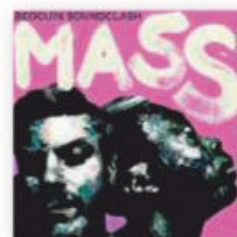
WARP, OUT 18 OCTOBER

**Concentration-ruining fourth LP from New York experimentalists.**

Unless you enjoy music made by mutant anime mice, there is nothing relaxing about Juice B Crypts. Instead, Ian Williams and John Stanier – now the core of Battles – have made a record that mimics and mangles modern sensory overload – a random migraine generator. Like Penguin Café Orchestra stitched-and-glitched into oblivion, their fourth LP wobbles towards hysteria, the sound of circuits melting, nerves burning out. It's addictively brilliant, especially the unhinged funk of Titanium 2 Step, featuring Liquid Liquid's Sal Principato, or Sugar Foot, starring Yes's Jon Anderson and Tawainese band Prairie WWW, like a prog night in a Minecraft niteclub. Worth its weight in paracetamol. ★★ ★ ★

VICTORIA SEGAL

**Listen To:** IZM | Sugar Foot | Titanium 2 Step



## BEDOUIIN SOUNDCLASH

MASS

MR BONGO/EASY STAR/SONY CANADA,

OUT 4 OCTOBER

**Irie-inspired Canadians return in upbeat mood.**

Formed in 2001 by singer-guitarist Jay Malinowski and named after an obscure dub record, Bedouin Soundclash evolved into one of Canada's most successful alternative acts, twisting winsome pop melodies and spry reggae beats into appealing shapes. Malinowski's muse appeared to have deserted him following 2010's Light The Horizon, though in preparation for this crisply produced return he's clearly been checking the competition, with Salt Water's festival-ready pop-ska owing a major debt to Vampire Weekend and Clock Work's horn-powered soul echoing the Daptone label's vintage moves. Reggae diehards might baulk, but Malinowski has always been a populist rather than a purist. ★★ ★

RUPERT HOWE

**Listen To:** Salt Water | Clock Work



## BIG THIEF

TWO HANDS

4AD, OUT 11 OCTOBER

**Prolific Brooklyn quartet return with more off-kilter musings.**

It's been less than six months since Big Thief released their third album U.F.O.F., a stellar showcase for the band's otherworldly take on folk-rock, rendered unforgettable by Adrianne Lenker's charismatic, spine-tinglingly odd vocal performance. Now they are back with what they describe as that record's "earth twin", a supposedly more terrestrial companion piece. It's not an entirely convincing conceptual contrast, but there are certainly differences: Two Hands sees the band scrap the ghostly production and imbue the obliquely mystical lyrics with troubling allusions to violence. But the main distinction is the relative lack of spellbinding melodies – something that suggests Two Hands may be destined to languish in its predecessor's shadow. ★★ ★

RACHEL AROESTI

**Listen To:** Forgotten Eyes | Not



## ALEX CAMERON

MIAMI MEMORY

SECRETLY CANADIAN, OUT NOW

**Pastiche overpowers pop on Aussie troubadour's third.**

Sydney-born, New York-based Alex Cameron loves a good persona. For his first album, Jumping The Shark, that meant a has-been performer, complete with fake wrinkles; for follow-up Forced Witness, a lewd "bro" pining for a lover who's "almost 17". Here, he's somewhere between the two, with a Springsteen-raised-on-Pornhub vibe, titles like Stepdad, and a promise to "[eat] your ass like an oyster" on the title track. If you can believe it, the satire feels less ribald than before – even if sex-positive, baroque hand-clapper Far From Born Again hinges on a cheap "porn again" rhyme. Really, though, he's at his best when he tones down the act; End Is Nigh, a Misty-ish exploration of existential crises, is a stunner. ★★ ★

HANNAH J DAVIES

**Listen To:** End Is Nigh | Miami Memory | Far From Born Again



**DIIV (Zachary Cole Smith, second left): "confronts past transgressions."**

## DIIV

DECEIVER

CAPTURED TRACKS, OUT 4 OCTOBER

**US shoegaze revivalists serve up drug-free third album.**

The narcotic tribulations of DIIV have long overshadowed the music they make. Kurt Cobain-fixated singer Zachary Cole Smith's arrest for heroin possession in 2013 kicked off a cycle of rehab and relapses that became the chief thrust of any conversation surrounding the band. Following seemingly successful treatment in 2017, the now-clean

Smith confronts past transgressions on Deceiver, both directly (the self-flagellating album title, the abrasive Horsehead) and more obliquely – the band still favour layering dislocated US indie rock on top of gauzy vintage British shoegaze, but Skin Game and Taker noticeably have more focus. The result is a success as both an artistic statement and a mea culpa. ★★ ★ ★

DAVE EVERLEY

**Listen To:** Horsehead | Skin Game | Blankenship





Angel Olsen gets reflective on her “breathtakingly beautiful” fourth LP.



# HEART OF GLASS

St Louis singer crafts startling break-up album.

## ANGEL OLSEN ALL MIRRORS

JAGJAGUWAR, OUT 4 OCTOBER

As the titular image of a visual echo chamber suggests, Angel Olsen’s fourth album is primarily concerned with the twin themes of delusion and self-knowledge. It sees the singer-songwriter pick over a soured relationship: airing grievances and wrestling with the ghosts of a phantom future, all the while straining to view events objectively. The internal struggle is soundtracked by a 14-piece orchestra: dissonant strings, imperiously spacey synths and thudding percussion surge and retreat as the psychological storm brews.

Olsen began her career in the indie-folk tradition, but over the years her output has become more artful and affected. While 2016’s *My Woman* danced

between raucous strumming and dead-eyed crooning, her fourth solo LP sees her rein in the rowdy catharsis and focus on creating a sonic world that is exaggeratedly airless, bombastic and faintly

menacing. But it’s also a universe underpinned by contradiction: on *New Love Cassette*, Olsen’s delivery is simultaneously saccharine and zombie-like; the title track’s instrumentation is at once refined and unpredictable; while *Spring* sees her perfect a persona that’s both candid and strangely detached.

The end product lands, thrillingly, in uncharted territory – the closest discernible coordinates being mannered blue-eyed soul, 1950s sci-fi film scores, Roy Orbison and sardonic but troubled

alt-rock heroines. Novel and nostalgic, accessible and eccentric, *All Mirrors* strikes an impressive balance between the familiar and strange – resulting in an album that’s startling and breathtakingly beautiful.

★★★★

RACHEL AROESTI

**Listen To:** *All Mirrors* | New Love

## Q&A

ANGEL OLSEN opens up to RACHEL AROESTI about embracing the dark side and the fun of going wild.

**Before recording *All Mirrors* with a 14-piece band, you made a completely solo version. How did that influence the final product?**

“It helped me let go of the songs because I had a capture of them in their rawest form, so it was easier for me to collaborate and let others in. I’m a person who’s very like, ‘That’s my fucking song, don’t fuck with that shit!’ And I have a hard time collaborating because of that. But in order to work on being more open it’s

helpful for me to have a capture of a song that’s just me.”

**You reunited with indie super-producer John Congleton for this record – what made you decide to work with him again?**

“Honestly, he was going to work on [*her last album*] *My Woman* but there was a lot of stuff we didn’t agree on. And then, after I made that record, I started to understand how special he was as a producer. He never wastes his time on stuff he doesn’t

care about – he’s not trying to make shit because it’s cool.”

**Your early work is characterised by its intimacy, was that something that you wanted to preserve?**

“The strings are big and the synths are big, and people who don’t actually listen to the words will think it’s this big epic thing. But *My Woman* was a very happy record in comparison to a lot of my previous work and this one is revisiting a lot of old stuff, and it feels more raw in that way. The thing about making dark records is that it’s always relevant in everybody’s life, so it can be more fun to go wild and fucking Kate Bush that shit.”



# MAVERICK STYLE

Rejuvenated rap radical discovers the best form of his career.

## DANNY BROWN

UKNOWHATIMSAYIN?

WARP, OUT 4 OCTOBER

With his electric-shock hair, leather jackets and penchant for vintage rock T-shirts (Motörhead and Guns N'Roses included), Danny Brown doesn't look like a typical rap star. He's also, over the course of four wildly uninhibited albums, proved that he doesn't sound like one either. Having honed his skills on Detroit's underground scene before exploring the fringes of jazz, electronica and industrial grind on 2016's *Atrocity Exhibition*, his latest arrives following a period

of creative reassessment during which he found new focus under the guidance of New York rap legend Q-Tip.

Uknowhatimsayin? is Brown's most compelling set to date, but still boasts the wild-eyed, synaptic rush that made his earlier works so arresting. So while opener *Change Up* finds him musing on staying ahead of the game over psychedelic guitars and a loping, Massive Attack-like breakbeat, he soon flips the mood for the

playful, Q-Tip-produced *Dirty Laundry* (sample line: "Papa was a rolling stone, so I sold rocks to him"), before teaming up with Run The Jewels for Tearz's hard-stepping, mosh-pit roil.

At times reminiscent of Cypress Hill's B-Real, with a feral dash of Ol' Dirty Bastard, Brown's



nasal tone darts between styles with impish glee, hopping from Savage Nomad's squealing guitar riff to the euphoric, live-in-the-moment *Best Life* and slippery, Flying Lotus-produced *Negro Spiritual*. Keeping up with his often logic-defying wordplay can be a challenge. But the payoff is a startling insight into how the world looks from inside one of hip-hop's most original and consistently inventive minds.

★★★★

RUPERT HOWE

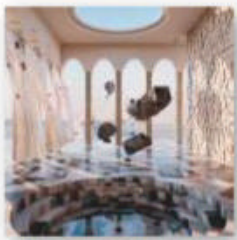
**Listen To:** *Change Up* | *Dirty Laundry* | *Negro Spiritual*

**This album  
boasts a  
wild-eyed,  
synaptic rush.**

Danny Brown:  
can he kick it?  
Yes, he can.







## EFTERKLANG

### ALTID SAMMEN

4AD, OUT NOW

**Danish trio's first album after seven-year hiatus.**

For their last record, 2012's *Piramida*, Efterklang ventured to an abandoned coal mine settlement in Norway, sampling the sounds of themselves running on wooden tracks and recording vocals in empty fuel tanks. This time around, they've hooked up with Belgian baroque ensemble B.O.X and reverted to singing in their native Danish. *Altid Sammen* (meaning "always together") is a mostly hushed affair, building to moments of Sigur Rós-like grandeur with strings, harp and brass, while *Vi Er Uendelig* comes over like Coldplay jamming with ambient '70s Krautrockers Popol Vuh. It all wafts along prettily, but the language barrier obviously snuffs any emotional connection to the lyrics. Nice, but probably inessential. ★★ ★

TOM DOYLE

**Listen To:** *Vi Er Uendelig* | *Uden Ansigt* | *Verden Forsvinder*



## FEET

### WHAT'S INSIDE IS MORE THAN JUST HAM

SONY, OUT 4 OCTOBER

**Wonderfully wonky debut from West Midlands oddballs.**

Thirty years on from Madchester, a new wave of miscreants is emerging from the provinces. Alongside the likes of Todmorden nutcases Working Men's Club, Coventry five-piece FEET combine the screwball lyrical themes of Shaun Ryder with the woozy feel of Syd Barrett's Pink Floyd. *Ad Blue* is an ode to the joys of replacing water with diesel in a cup of tea, while *Axe Man* is told from the perspective of a weapon-wielding burglar. The Britpop-phobic may find these grooves reductive. But when they hit their stride – as on Good Richard's *Crash Landing*'s approximation of Blur dropping acid with *Parquet Courts* – there's a timeless wit and energy here. ★★ ★

PAUL MOODY

**Listen To:** *Ad Blue* | *Good Richard's Crash Landing*



## KIM GORDON

### NO HOME RECORD

MATADOR, OUT 11 OCTOBER

**Sonic Youth founder's long-awaited solo adventure.**

Given she has achieved such artistic singularity over four decades of collaborating with others – Sonic Youth and Bill Nace among them – it's astonishing to realise that this is Kim Gordon's first solo album. *No Home Record* is both a squalling, sultry reinvention and a return to the drum machine, guitar and fragmented lyrics of her earliest

musical forays. But more than anything, it's a record that gorges itself on sound: the juddering distortion of *Sketch Artist* carries the same dark thrill of '70s Lou Reed, *Paprika Pony* is an unexpected R&B sidwinder, *Earthquake* sprawls over a smouldering Velvets drone, while on *Cookie Butter* she runs a list of wants and observations over a drum'n'bass scuttle. It feels hungry, modern and thrilling. ★★ ★

LAURA BARTON

**Listen To:** *Sketch Artist* | *Paprika Pony* | *Earthquake*



## GIRL BAND

### THE TALKIES

ROUGH TRADE, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Abrasive Dubliners return after four-year hiatus.**

The second LP from uncompromising Dublin four-piece Girl Band opens with *Prolix*, 110 seconds of increasingly ragged breathing set atop a low humming noise. That it's the most daytime radio-friendly track on *The Talkies* gives a clue as to just how abrasive the rest of the album is. Throughout, jarring sheets of guitar noise work against queasily lurching rhythms while frontman Dara Kiely alternates between darkly muttering and screaming like a possessed Birthday Party-vintage Nick Cave. It's a punishing listen, like Big Black shorn of Steve Albini's penchant for levity. Highlights include the slow-building *Couch Comover* and the relatively upbeat *Prefab Castle*, but this is not a record for the faint-hearted. ★★ ★

PHIL MONGREDIEN

**Listen To:** *Couch Comover* | *Prefab Castle* | *Amygdala*



## HOBO JOHNSON

### THE FALL OF HOBO JOHNSON

REPRISE/WARNER, OUT NOW

**Sacramento wordsmith delivers hits and misses on second outing.**

With Hobo Johnson's music, it's hard to tell whether what you're encountering is poetry, rap or an actor's anxiety-ridden monologue being spliced with rock, folk and hip-hop. And that's precisely his appeal. Blessed with a formidable ability to animate the emotion in his voice, on his second album Johnson delivers self-deprecation, frustration and wit on *Subaru Crosstrek XV* and *Uglykid*. Sometimes the exact same approach misfires. Take *You & The Cockroach*: a studio brain fart that traces the history of human evolution across four infuriating minutes. It's a shame because when Johnson drops the schtick to tackle alcoholism on the piano-led *Happiness*, he becomes more captivating than ever. ★★ ★

GEORGE GARNER

**Listen To:** *Happiness* | *Subaru Crosstrek XV* | *Uglykid*



## JENNY HVAL

### THE PRACTICE OF LOVE

SACRED BONES, OUT NOW

**Norwegian artist lightens up and stretches her parameters.**

Sex, death, menstruation, vampires: these are just a few of the topics that have reverberated through Jenny Hval's dark and intimate music. On her seventh LP, however, the 39-year-old dials down the intensity, swapping drones and creeping basslines for a sound inspired by the beatific breeziness of 1990s trance. Over gently rustling breakbeats, Hval's delicate vocal bounces along melodies equal parts cheerful and forlorn. Yet a newfound sonic serenity doesn't preclude cerebral concerns: this record sees the musician meditate on the concept of love with erudition and irreverence. Startling, gorgeous and illuminating, *The Practice Of Love* sees Hval continue to stretch the parameters of pop. ★★ ★

RACHEL AROESTI

**Listen To:** *Accident* | *Ashes To Ashes* | *Six Red Cannas*



## JPEGMAFIA

### ALL MY HEROES ARE CORNBALLS

ETQ, OUT NOW

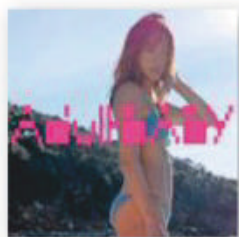
**Difficult but rewarding LP from the enfant terrible of noise-rap.**

JPEGMAFIA, the nom de plume of Baltimore rapper Barrington DeVaughn Hendricks, has been trailing this album as "the disappointment". His 2018 record, the noise-rap *Veteran*, was widely acclaimed and although this isn't technically his second album, he's certainly given the impression that it's been his most difficult. Using sound as provocation, these are 18 tracks of jarring noise and pop culture references. Armchair activism is skewered on *Rap Grow Old & Die x No Child...* and *BasicBitchTearGas* features a screwed-up cover of TLC's teen anthem *No Scrubs*. JPEGMAFIA's flashes of brilliance are obscured by a bloated tracklist, but they're worth digging out. ★★ ★

KATE SOLOMON

**Listen To:** *Grimy Waifu* | *All My Heroes Are Cornballs*





## KAZU

### ADULT BABY

ADULT BABY RECORDS, OUT NOW

**Electronic odyssey of Blonde Redhead singer.**

Kazu Makino spent nine albums as Blonde Redhead's frontwoman, her voice labelled "ethereal" with such regularity that it probably now constitutes part of the OED definition. That voice is still the focal point of her solo debut, but a relocation from New York to Tuscany has brought a new earthiness to its tone, as if it has taken root and spread a little. Stepping away from the guitar-led sound of her former band, here she sings over loops, synths, Moog and orchestral bursts. It's pleasing to hear a familiar voice finding its footing on new terrain, particularly on tracks such as the skewed, feverish Name And Age. Or on Salty, a homage to equestrianism. Less immediate than her band work, it's a record that is rewarding and quietly revelatory. ★★★★★

LAURA BARTON

**Listen To:** Salty | Name And Age



## KEANE

### CAUSE & EFFECT

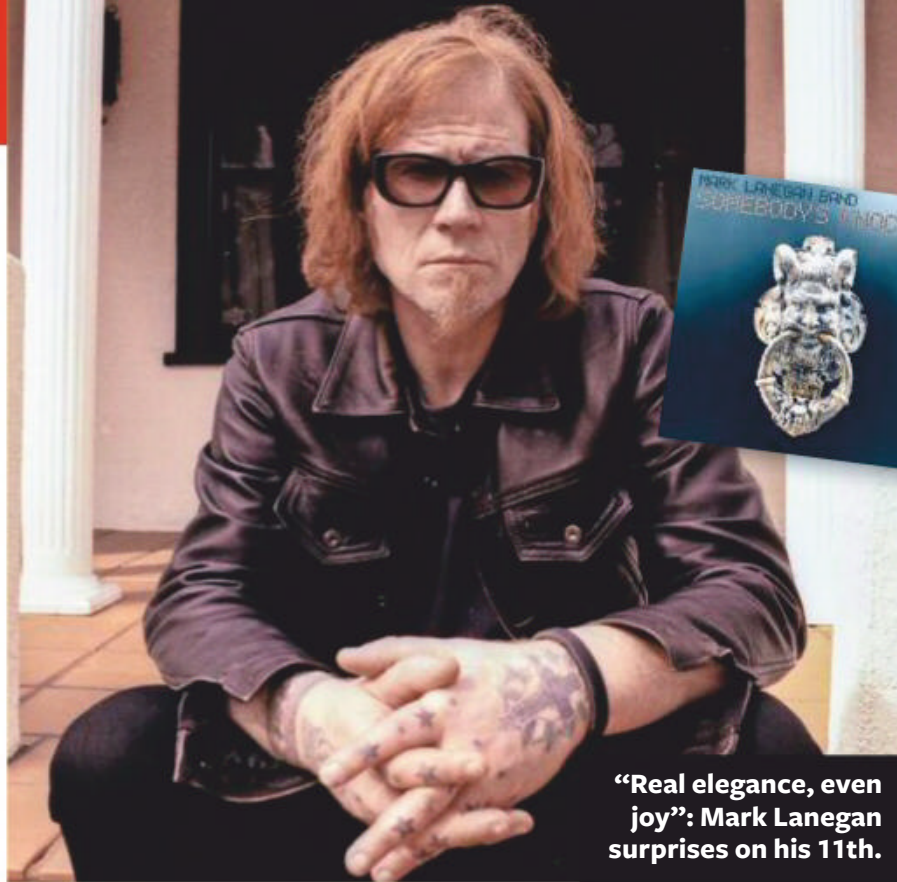
ISLAND, OUT NOW

**Belated fifth album from piano-balladeers.**

The more the years rolled by after 2012's Strangeland, the more Tom Chaplin's solo career and Tim Rice-Oxley and Jesse Quin's Mt. Desolation seemed to be the way ahead and the less likely it seemed that Keane would re-form. Yet, once Chaplin decided re-birth was a good idea and Rice-Oxley had written a batch of songs that weren't right for his proposed solo LP, nature took its course. They channel The Killers on The Way I Feel and A-ha on the rueful Put The Radio On, but Cause & Effect plays to their strengths. They're at their best when Chaplin's vulnerable vocals give Rice-Oxley's confessional songs the stamp of emotional authenticity, particularly on the fragile Strange Room. Troubled balm for troubled times. ★★★★★

JOHN AIZLEWOOD

**Listen To:** Put The Radio On | Strange Room | You're Not Home



**"Real elegance, even joy": Mark Lanegan surprises on his 11th.**

## MARK LANEGAN BAND

### SOMEBODY'S KNOCKING

HEAVENLY, OUT 18 OCTOBER

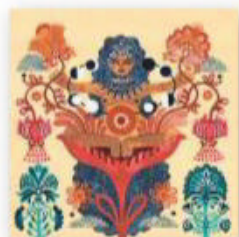
**Looming rock lifer opens new doors of perception.**

"There's ghosts inside this house," sings Mark Lanegan on Penthouse High, a haunting song that won't surprise anyone who has followed him from Screaming Trees deep into his biblically intense solo career. With his 11th LP, though, Lanegan finds other channels for communing with his spirits: the

disco table-rapping of Disbelief Suspension or Playing Nero's Joy Division background radiation. Lanegan is incapable of making music that tips the scales at anything but "monumental". Yet behind the visionary lyrical flashes of a life "going downtown the wrong direction" there's a real elegance, even a joy, to the way he mixes his dark materials. ★★★★★

VICTORIA SEGAL

**Listen To:** Playing Nero | Disbelief Suspension | Penthouse High



## KEFAYA & ELAHA SOROOR

### SONGS OF OUR MOTHERS

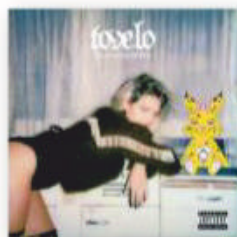
BELLA UNION, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Afghan reality TV star meets London world music collective.**

Singer Elaha Soroor became famous in her homeland through her appearances on The Voice-style show Afghan Star, but soon grew controversial for her pro-feminist stance. Subsequently fleeing her homeland and arriving in London, she met Kefaya, an amorphous group whose members hail from the UK, Greece, Iran and India. Unsurprisingly, Songs Of Our Mothers is an exotic genre-blend of jazz, dub and electronica. Like a lot of world music, it probably has niche appeal, although Soroor's voice is beautifully expressive. The showstopper comes with the Radiohead-ish piano ballad, Khina Beyarin, where Soroor fully reveals her dazzling talent. ★★★★★

TOM DOYLE

**Listen To:** Khina Beyarin | Charsi



## TOVE LO

### SUNSHINE KITTY

UNIVERSAL/ISLAND, OUT NOW

**Swedish pop star settles into relative comfort.**

After three LPs of emotionally ragged pop, Sunshine Kitty is being prefaced as Swedish singer Tove Lo's "happy" album. While that's borne out on the louche disco of the Jax Jones-assisted Jacques, and bubbling lead single Glad He's Gone, which finds her dishing out relationship advice with the hard-earned wisdom of the recently loved-up, she's still in her element luxuriating in that crisis point where comfort is soured by paranoia. So highlight Mistaken succumbs to jealousy over a minimal synth pulse, while Mateo weaves a tale of falling for someone famous over a featherlight '80s Madonna backing. Perhaps the anti-bad boy anthem Shifted sums up her new mindset best: "I know I go for crazy, but I'm tired too." Relative stability suits her just fine. ★★★★★

MICHAEL CRAGG

**Listen To:** Mateo | Mistaken



## LOWER DENS

### THE COMPETITION

DOMINO, OUT NOW

**Unsettling concept album from the Maryland indie band.**

From the start a sense of unease pervades Lower Dens' fourth album, The Competition. Its title alludes to the anxieties created by modern capitalism, the concept behind a record which tries to make sense of current times. With jittery electric squalls constantly threatening to overwhelm Jana Hunter's delicate vocals, it evokes the precariousness of an uncaring society. Young Republicans pokes fun at the suburban cult of Republicanism, while Lucky People looks back to the excess of the '80s by interpolating Chris Isaak's Wicked Game. The effect is a sense of yearning for that time, when the competition of the title was born. Clever, if a little monotonous; very much an LP for our times. ★★★★★

KATE SOLOMON

**Listen To:** Lucky People | Young Republicans



## THE LUMINEERS

### III

DECCA RECORDS, OUT NOW

**Surprisingly affecting concept album from Americana mainstays.**

On paper this is a shuddering idea for a record: rousing Colorado folk-rockers The Lumineers present a concept album told in three chapters, each relating the life of a different member of the (fictional) Sparks family, and together weaving a multi-generational story of addiction and desperation. However, the surprise of III is that the band manage to find great tenderness beneath the conceit (and the occasionally hamfisted lyrics). The stark piano-led opener Donna lays out Wesley Schultz's voice in its roughest, warmest splendour, closing number Salt And The Sea finds an irresistible plaintiveness and in the album's belly sits the heart-wrenching folk swell of Gloria. It's cleverly and passionately done. ★★★★★

LAURA BARTON

**Listen To:** Donna | Gloria | Salt And The Sea



A Guy walks into a bar: Elbow (from left, Craig Potter, Pete Turner, Guy Garvey and Mark Potter) get serious.



# DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

**Eight albums in, Elbow's optimism gives way to self-doubt and despair.**

## ELBOW

**GIANTS OF ALL SIZES**

POLYDOR, OUT 11 OCTOBER

Guy Garvey has long been one of rock's great consolers, affirming the power of family, friendship and community to heal deep wounds. But on *White Noise White Heat*, the hulking centrepiece of Elbow's eighth album, he's not here to make anyone feel good, least of all himself. "Who am I, some blarney Mantovani with a lullaby when the sky's falling in?" he snaps, inspired by his furious despair over the Grenfell

Tower disaster. "I believe I'm giving in." Mark Potter's bilious guitar solo that follows isn't so much played as coughed up. The message is clear: you can't write a *One Day Like This* in days like these.

For much of *Giants Of All Sizes* Elbow use ominous rhythms and

keyboard drones to paint with a different palette: bruise-violet and midnight-blue. Garvey sounds different, too, willing to sit with his fears rather than chase them away with optimism and charm. He folds the national trauma of Brexit into personal grief over his father and two close friends on the elegiac *Empires*: "How can a bland, unremarkable, typical Tuesday be day of the

**The message is clear: you can't write a *One Day Like This* in days like these.**

dead?" The *Delayed 3:15's* images of urban decay ("spray-paint swastikas and cocks") form a sour riposte to the street-corner bonding of 2011's *Lippy Kids*, until beatific strings arrive like the emergency services.

When comfort does finally materialise in the form of the exquisite love song *My Trouble* and the lambent father-son hymnal *On Deronda Road* (imagine Fleet Foxes remixed by Four Tet), it's all the more moving because Elbow have taken such a raw, self-questioning route to get there. ★★★★★

DORIAN LYNKEY

**Listen To:** *Dexter & Sinister* | *Empires* | *White Noise White Heat* | *My Trouble*





**Absolute  
Radio**



**WAKE UP  
TO  
REAL MUSIC**

ON THE  
**DAVE  
BERRY**  
BREAKFAST  
SHOW

**DIGITAL RADIO & MOBILE**





## MOON DUO

### STARS ARE THE LIGHT

SACRED BONES, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**US psych explorers set controls to cosmic disco for seventh effort.**

Portland-based space rockers Moon Duo (a pairing of Wooden Shjips guitarist Ripley Johnson and Vive La Void keyboardist Sanae Yamada) have been plying their brand of blissed-out, hypnotic Krautrock for a decade now. So while it might seem intuitive for the duo to employ the production skills of Spacemen 3's Sonic Boom for this, their seventh album, there's a nagging sense it could be just cosmic-jams-business as usual. Fortunately that's not the case: Lost Heads' shimmering disco swirl provides a lush backdrop for Yamada and Johnson's gauzy, conjoined vocals; the escalating synths and bubbling bassline on Eternal Shores comes over like an hallucinogenic, twinkly Peaking Lights. As a result, Moon Duo have eclipsed their previous best here. ★★★★★

SIMON McEWEN

**Listen To:** Flying | Lost Heads



## MYSTERY JETS

### A BILLION HEARTBEATS

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL,

OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Indie survivors meld big Extinction Rebellion energy to rock riffs.**

Jaunty indie tykes Mystery Jets aren't exactly known for their political fervour, but in comparison to their earlier work they've approached their sixth album with all the revolutionary zeal of Che Guevara doing a secret set on Glastonbury's Leftfield stage. Shot through with Foals-like bombast, opener Screwdriver rails against the alt-right while the pulsing History Has Its Eyes On You sees frontman Blaine Harrison casting himself as an ally to millennial feminism. A record of big, punchy tunes pinned down by big punchy themes – the fabulous Petty Drone sparkles like peak Suede – with the saccharine acoustic-driven singalong Campfire Song being the only major misstep ★★★★★

LEONIE COOPER

**Listen To:** Screwdriver | Petty Drone | A Billion Heartbeats



## ONE TRUE PAIRING

### ONE TRUE PAIRING

DOMINO, OUT NOW

**This year's second great Wild Beasts solo album.**

Fans mourning the dissolution of Kendal art-poppers Wild Beasts in 2017 haven't been short of consolations recently. Following Hayden Thorpe's solo debut in May, co-vocalist Tom Fleming releases his new project, One True Pairing. Fleming tended to be the earthier foil to Thorpe's more fanciful falsetto and here his distinctive baritone reverberates around the sort of synth-rock soundscapes revived to soundtrack '80s nostalgia fest Stranger Things. Crashing drum machines and hair-metal guitar breaks curdle and warp around the edges as Fleming's arresting turns of phrase throw up images of violence and recrimination. A fascinating new direction. ★★★★★

CHRIS CATCHPOLE

**Listen To:** Weapons | Dawn At The Factory | One True Pairing



## MOLLY SARLÉ

### KARAOKE ANGEL

PARTISAN RECORDS, OUT NOW

**Stunning folk-pop debut from one-third of Mountain Man.**

Appalachian a cappella group Mountain Man might have only released two albums in nine years, but they've also doubled up as a training ground for a very special kind of trad-rooted pop artist. As well as nurturing Amelia Meath, half of synth-folk duo Sylvan Esso, the trio is also where Molly Sarlé cut her teeth. Her solo debut Karaoke Queen is a thing of meditative beauty, which guides you through the hushed barroom portraits of the title track, bringing to mind Cat Power at her most gentle and then on to surging, Fleetwood Mac-meets-War On Drugs floor-fillers like This Close. It's far removed from her other band's barrel-aged folk but marks Sarlé as one of 2019's most exciting new artists. ★★★★★

LEONIE COOPER

**Listen To:** This Close | Faith For Doubt | Almost Free



She's every woman: Rapsody channels the greats.

## RAPSODY

### EVE

VIRGIN EMI, OUT NOW

**Superb summoning up of rap traditions.**

Eve is the second album in two years that names each track after a different black woman. Where Sons Of Kemet's Your Queen Is A Reptile was a largely instrumental dance-jazz affair, Rapsody's third LP uses a range of people (Oprah, the late Aaliyah, Serena Williams) as lyrical jump-offs because, in the North Carolina rapper's words,

"I am every black woman." It's this deft imagination that turns Ibtiyah, her take on GZA's Liquid Swords, with cameos from the Wu-Tang man and D'Angelo, into a tribute to old-school female MCs as much as the fencer Ibtiyah Muhammad, America's first hijab-wearing Olympian. And with producer 9th Wonder on inspired form (see Myrli's sampling of Herbert's microhouse gem The Audience), Eve is a hip-hop delight. ★★★★★

STEVE YATES

**Listen To:** Ibtiyah | Myrli | Oprah



## THE SHERLOCKS

### UNDER YOUR SKY

INFECTIOUS, OUT 4 OCTOBER

**Indie-rock foot soldiers dig in on album two.**

The indie-rock barricades have been shaken in recent years, but they'll never fall as long as the likes of The Sherlocks are manning them. The South Yorkshire band's second album sounds like it's been parachuted in from a mid-afternoon slot at Reading 2007. One-size-fits-all anthems such as I Want It All and Dreams are rousing enough without being over-burdened by any discernible personality, though they've smoothed out the rougher edges of their debut this time around – the sweetly romantic back-of-a-postcard reminiscing of NYC (Sing It Loud) has a bag full of "Whoah whoahs!" and isn't afraid to use them. Their enthusiasm alone makes Under Your Sky difficult to dislike, even if it's hard to actually love. ★★★★★

DAVE EVERLEY

**Listen To:** I Want It All | Dreams | Time To Go



## STURGILL SIMPSON

### SOUND & FURY

ELEKTRA, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Outlaw star ditches country to become a monster of rock.**

For the past three albums, Sturgill Simpson has almost single-handedly brought the rebellious sound of outlaw country back into the mainstream, with a Grammy to show for it. Yet those expecting more buttery alt-hillbilly will be in for a shock, as he's gone and morphed into a one-man Led Zeppelin. Growling against the toxic trials of the music industry, the twanging Mercury In Retrograde is closest he comes to his former self, with the rest of the record dedicated to fuzzed-up distortion and meaty Black Keys riffs, the gnarly Fastest Horse In Town being the most furious example. This is the sound of a man doing exactly what he wants, rather than what everyone expects and it's totally compelling. ★★★★★

LEONIE COOPER

**Listen To:** Remember To Breathe | Fastest Horse In Town | Sing Along



Eat your heart out:  
Starcrawler, featuring  
Arrow De Wilde (second left).



## STARCRAWLER DEVOUR YOU

ROUGH TRADE, OUT 11 OCTOBER

**A punky triumph that glistens with Hollywood history.**

Starcrawler couldn't be from anywhere else in the world but Los Angeles. Distilling the sleaze of the vintage Sunset Strip into their thrashy anthems, on their second LP they rip through tearaway teen trash (Lizzy), glistening glam (No More Pennies), hardcore punk brutality (Toy Teenager) and super fun house party grunge (I Don't

Need You, Rich Taste). The key to stitching this punk patchwork together comes in Arrow de Wilde's raspy delivery and indomitable energy. Starcrawler might be known as a great live band, with de Wilde spitting, screaming and high-kicking her way through their confrontational gigs, but with Devour You they prove they're every bit as impressive on record too. ★★★★★

LEONIE COOPER

**Listen To:** No More Pennies | Bet My Brains | Lizzy | Toy Teenager



## SERAFINA STEER THE MIND IS A TRAP

VITAMIN CONCEPT, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Mercurial harpist catches the imagination with fourth solo LP.**

With her vivid left-field art-pop – especially 2013's superb The Moths Are Real and her work with Bas Jan – Serafina Steer has displayed a hand-painted, individually numbered kind of songwriting talent. Here, Jarvis Cocker's harpist of choice returns to her roots, using electric harp, synthesizers and drum machines to create more abstract pieces. This Is My Emotion could have been released on late-'90s Warp, while the neurotic weave of Provides Common Ground and Auto's "self-audit" confirm Steer's gift for catching uneasy internal dialogues and troubled moments. The Mind Is A Trap isn't her most immediate work, but there's no getting away from its atmospheric lures. ★★★★★

VICTORIA SEGAL

**Listen To:** Provides Common Ground | This Is My Emotion | Auto



## KELLEY STOLTZ NATURAL CAUSES

BANANA & LOUIE, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**The Kinks meet Cope on prolific San Franciscan's latest left-turn.**

Having been both a touring member of Echo & The Bunnymen and also recording a track-by-track cover of their debut LP, Crocodiles, pop polymath Kelley Stoltz isn't shy about his Anglophile leanings. For his latest LP, the San Francisco singer-guitarist-producer pushes them even further, imagining what Teardrop Explodes collaborating with Ray Davies, circa 1966's Face To Face, might sound like. It's a characteristically eccentric modus operandi. The likes of My Regime and 2020 neatly combine Julian Cope's sonic vision with the whimsy of his '60s forebears. It's Stoltz's own fried personality that wins out though, fizzing with quirks and ideas that soon move away from – if never quite match up to – the source material. ★★★★★

CHRIS CATCHPOLE

**Listen To:** 2020 | My Regime



## TEGAN AND SARA HEY, I'M JUST LIKE YOU

SIRE/WARNER, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Teen melodrama and adult worldiness from Canadian twins.**

A rediscovered tape of songs written while Tegan And Sara navigated a tricky adolescence as identical twins in Canada forms the basis for Hey, I'm Just Like You. Released in tandem with their memoir, High School, it features songs written by teenagers and re-recorded as they approach their 40s. It's an occasional return to their punk roots, more often smoothed over by the glistening pop production they've been known for more recently. I'll Be Back Someday is a pop-punk smash of power chords and teenage melodrama, and there are flashes of the twins' future sophisticated melodies. It's a thrilling project for fans and a pleasant album for Tegan And Sara newcomers. ★★★★★

KATE SOLOMON

**Listen To:** Hold My Breath Until I Die | We Don't Have Fun When We're Together Anymore



## TEMPLES HOT MOTION

ATO, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Three albums in, Kettering combo's psychedelic pop shines.**

Rather than tinker with the formula of their two previous albums, Temples have worked hard on refining it, self-producing from a studio outbuilding at singer James Bagshaw's house. Virtually every track here seems to be tailored to be a potential single, whether it's the shuffling pop joy of the title track or the anthemic You're Either On Something (so Tame Impala, it might even be mistaken for Tame Impala). The jazzy Atomise has the stoned wonder of early, post-Syd Barrett Pink Floyd, though rendered with a production that is unmistakably 21st century. The sonic invention – fast-cuts between moods and styles, washy layers of aural colours – never gets in the way of the songs and the result is a triumph. ★★★★★

TOM DOYLE

**Listen To:** Hot Motion | You're Either On Something | Atomise



## MAX DE WARDENER KOLMAR

VILLAGE GREEN, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Quirky producer works wonders with old-school synths.**

A sometime collaborator with electro prankster Matthew Herbert, Max De Wardener's newest solo project finds him in a more reflective state of mind. Drawing on modern classical forms and contemporary electronica, he's created an album of subtle, shifting moods that moves with deceptive ease from Amber's grainy, Eno-like ambience to the hypnotic Free Radicals, with its echoes of mantric motorik, nocturnal techno and African percussion. Employing vintage proto-synthesizers such as the ondes martenot imbues an unexpected warmth, though there's nothing dated about the angular bleeps and strobing rhythm that makes Palindrome resemble the soundtrack to some mysterious future ritual. ★★★★★

RUPERT HOWE

**Listen To:** Amber | Free Radicals | Palindrome



## CHARLI XCX CHARLI

ATLANTIC, OUT NOW

**Pop powerhouse gets lost on her third album.**

Charlotte Aitchison has spent her career balancing a gift for crafting maddeningly catchy pop songs – Icona Pop's I Love It; the Iggy Azalea duet Fancy – and an obsession with the bleeding edge. She continues this quest on her latest album, enlisting AG Cook of avant-garde innovators PC Music to provide synths that rasp and creak like a malfunctioning computer programme, as well as a post-ironic embrace of uncool tropes (Eurodance, melodramatic '80s balladeering, cheesy '90s pop). Yet between Cook's trademark production and the song-stealing brilliance of her collaborators (Christine And The Queens, Lizzo, Big Freedia), it often feels as if Aitchison's nasal croon and counter-intuitive topline are the least interesting bits of her own project. ★★★★★

RACHEL AROESTI

**Listen To:** Gone | 1999 | Shake It



# DON'T GIVE UP

Eleven albums in, alt-country veterans show quiet defiance.



## WILCO ODE TO JOY

DBPM RECORDS, OUT 4 OCTOBER

There's a nobility to Jeff Tweedy's assertion that "nobody needs more Wilco music." It's a gently self-mocking acknowledgement that, this far into a career, a band better be certain they aren't just acting out of indulgent habit. Yet *Ode To Joy*, the follow-up to 2016's *Schmilco*, more than earns its place in a troubled world. Hushed, rumpled, downcast but watchful, it embodies a conscious decision not to succumb to despair and to turn hanging on by your fingertips into a gesture of supple creative grace.

"I remember when wars would end," sings Tweedy on the sorrowful folk-rock elegy of *Before Us*, and *Ode To Joy* feels drained by permanently high threat levels, the need for constant vigilance, both emotionally and politically. Even the most solid songs – the *Lost*



"Exactly what's needed": Wilco, featuring Jeff Tweedy (second left), bring balm in troubled times.

Weekend John Lennon haze of *Everyone Hides*, or last waltz *Love Is Everywhere* (Beware) – seem scratchy with anxiety and adrenalin, blurred at the edges with flickering, nervous guitar, odd little scuffs and tears. The accusatory folk dance of *Citizens*, with its "white lies" chorus, or the

rising Television-like tension of *We Were Lucky* underline the unease, but there's also a great deal of redemptive beauty nestling in the depressive *One And A Half Stars*, or the communal rhythms of *Quiet Amplifier*. "I try in my way to love everyone," sings Tweedy, trying to hang on to his

humanity, to keep his shape, and *Ode To Joy* shivers on this ledge between defiance and dissolution. Despite Tweedy's fears, it turns out more Wilco music is exactly what's needed. ★★★★★  
VICTORIA SEGAL  
**Listen To:** *Quiet Amplifier* | *Citizens* | *Before Us*

## MUST BUYS The essential albums of the last few months



**Sleater-Kinney**  
**The Center Won't Hold**  
SUB POP

The ninth Sleater-Kinney album may have lost them their drummer, Janet Weiss, but this ill-omened record betrays no cracks in the foundation. Indeed, the reboot of their sound, ably stewarded by Annie "St. Vincent" Clark, shows a band with a renewed sense of purpose.



**Ty Segall**  
**First Taste**  
DRAG CITY  
With an artist as wildly prolific as Segall, some

of his albums have struggled to stand out in a packed release schedule. But the garage rocker has hit upon a novel way to keep things interesting on his 11th solo outing: by banning guitars. The result is a record exploding with ideas and interesting twists.



**Liam Gallagher**  
**Why Me? Why Not.**  
WARNER RECORDS  
Proving that his debut album, *As*

*You Were*, was no fluke, Gallagher's second LP played to his strengths once again. Classic rock'n'roll, big singalongs and the odd ballad... little has changed since his last outing, but when you're sounding this great, why meddle with a winning formula?



**Sam Fender**  
**Hypersonic Missiles**  
POLYDOR  
While British artists tend to be a

little squeamish about the sort of widescreen epics minted by Bruce Springsteen, 23-year-old Fender here shows he isn't afraid to tackle the big picture. Fuelled by tales of frustration and release, this is an LP that heralds a new era of popular political song.



"A near-miss from a parallel universe": Jonathan Fire\*Eater, featuring the late Stewart Lupton (third left), New York, 1994.



# LOST BOYS

Buried treasure from the '90s New York City underground.

## JONATHAN FIRE\*EATER

TREMBLE UNDER BOOM LIGHTS

THIRD MAN RECORDS, OUT 18 OCTOBER

Never mind the stuff about pricking your finger on a spindle and falling asleep for one hundred years: if the witch had really wanted to lay a heavy curse on *Sleeping Beauty*, she would have leaned over the cradle and cackled, "You will fail to live up to your potential." The tale of DC-born, New York-blooded five-piece Jonathan Fire\*Eater does not come with a happy ending: it's a story of hype and

hubris, drugs and dissipation, of early promise eaten away from inside and hammered away from without. In the late-'90s, the band's whip-smart image – office-junior Bad Seeds, Artful Dodger Ian Curtises – and Molotov garage-rock had made them subjects of a bidding war so ferocious that rumour had it they feared becoming too mainstream and asked for their debut's sales to be capped at half a million. *Wolf Songs For Lambs*, released in 1997, was a lot more coolly received and sold closer to 12,000.

They quit in 1998, guitarist Paul Maroon, organist Walter Martin and drummer Matt Barrick

forming The Walkmen with significantly more longevity. Revival tent pin-up Stewart Lupton, though, slipped through the music industry's grates. The singer later studied poetry and made music as The Child Ballads and The Beatin's, but his heroin addiction had been a terminal faultline running through Jonathan Fire\*Eater, a fissure that widened year on year, leaving him increasingly stranded on the other side of whatever success should have looked like. He died in May 2018, aged 43.

This expanded reissue of their highwired 1996 EP *Tremble Under Boom Lights* underlines again the

terrible waste, not least with the inclusion of *In The Head*, the last song they recorded and a metamorphic press of *The Birthday Party*, *My Bloody Valentine* and *Tomorrow Never Knows*. In *Meet Me In The Bathroom*, Lizzy Goodman's oral history of the '90s New York music scene, it is clear Jonathan Fire\*Eater were a band who threw oil on the ambition of other nascent bands, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Interpol among them. Lupton and colleagues were considered a kind of speculative fiction Strokes, an ancestral prototype, a near-miss from a parallel universe. Yet Jonathan



FREDERICK BARRICK



## ALSO OUT...



## THE BEATLES

## ABBEY ROAD ANNIVERSARY EDITION

APPLE, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Fab Four's triumphant swan song expanded.**

Paul McCartney's grating Maxwell's Silver Hammer aside, Abbey Road showed The Beatles at the very peak of their collective powers, not least on side two's masterful and joyous medley of songs. It's certainly not the sound of a band who were sick of the sight of one another. This is something echoed in the unreleased takes and demos included here which reveal a jovial atmosphere filled with quips, chatter and McCartney's riposte to a neighbour's noise complaint. ★★★★★ CHRIS CATCHPOLE



## JOHN COLTRANE

## BLUE WORLD

IMPULSE!, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Session rescued from the jazz great's vaults.**

The world waits half a century for a new John Coltrane album, then two arrive at once. This takes up where last year's "lost" album Both Directions At Once left off, again featuring the classic quartet. Recorded in 1964 for a Canadian movie soundtrack, the shimmering versions of past highlights (Naima, Village Blues) and the exhilarating title track offer a fascinating glimpse of where Coltrane was headed next – the triumphant A Love Supreme, recorded just a few months later. ★★★★★ RUPERT HOWE



## MASSIVE ATTACK

## MASSIVE ATTACK VS. MAD PROFESSOR (MEZZANINE REMIX TAPES)

UMC/VIRGIN EMI, OUT NOW

**Dub maestro takes Mezzanine to the next level.**

Originally intended to be released (like its predecessor No Protection) as a companion piece, these sparse deconstructions of Massive Attack's dark, post-punky 1998 LP Mezzanine were shelved until now. In the hands of UK studio whizz Mad Professor, Angel and Risingson become echo-laden, ethereal abstractions, while an immaculately stoned cover of the Banshees' Metal Postcard amps up the all-pervading dread-ness. ★★★★★ SIMON McEWEN



## GUILLERMO PORTABALES

## EL CARRETERO

WORLD CIRCUIT, OUT 4 OCTOBER

**The late, great Cuban singer's finest work collected.**

The singer-songwriter and guitarist Guillermo Portabales was a star throughout Latin America until his career was cut tragically short by a traffic accident in 1970. These striking recordings date from the previous decade when he was already considered a master of Cuba's laid-back guajira rhythm, his deceptively simple arrangements and subtle percussion, especially on the emotive title track, an ode to a humble cart-driver, proving a major influence on many later Cuban acts, not least Buena Vista Social Club. ★★★★★ RUPERT HOWE



## STRAY CATS

## RUNAWAY BOYS!

BMG, OUT 27 SEPTEMBER

**Top-notch, early-'80s new wave-era rockabilly.**

Brian Setzer's rockabilly revivalists way exceeded expectations on their roof-raising 40th-anniversary tour recently. This accompanying turn-of-the-'80s recordings anthology proves they were outright heroes amidst that era's tribal hoo-hah – not for nothing did "rivals" The Specials pick them, contrary to mods-vs-rockers diktat, as their 1980 tour support. Included here are all three early albums (best to focus on the two Dave Edmunds-produced belters, Stray Cats and Rant N' Rave), plus an 11-track curios set where rock'n'roll classics Somethin' Else and Oh Boy get revamped in super-charged Stray Cats style. Still sounds a gas. ★★★★★ ANDREW PERRY

lost siblings. The corrupted family drama of *The Search For Cherry Red* comes ripped from the pages of a pulp novel, a slab of Hollywood Babylon that could turn James Ellroy green; on-brand bonus Lee Hazlewood cover *The City Never Sleeps* treats New York like a hot date and hotter mess; *Winston Plum: Undertaker* looks straight into an open casket with a pallid shudder.

The peak, however, is the hectic, perfect short story *Give Me Daughters*, which sees Lupton praying for female offspring, his eye on posterity all along: "If ever this motorcycle goes slip in the mud now/Well, let me have these children to carry down the blood."

He was right to worry – Jonathan Fire\*Eater did crash and burn. *Tremble Under Boom Lights*, though, is an indelible legacy, songs to keep their name alive. ★★★★★

VICTORIA SEGAL

**Listen To:** *The Search For Cherry Red* | *Give Me Daughters* | *In The Head*

## VANISHING ACTS

Three more forgotten '90s artists.



## The Mooney Suzuki

ESTRUS, 2000

Also name-checked in *Meet Me In The Bathroom* as could-have-should-have New York scenesters, this febrile garage-rock band – named after Can's two vocalists – galvanised the nascent Strokes. ★★★



## Six Finger Satellite

SUB POP, 1995

These Rhode Island hysterics created a nightmare synth-fuelled static. Their soundman James Murphy went on to name his label after their sound rig – *Death From Above*. ★★★★★



## Brainiac

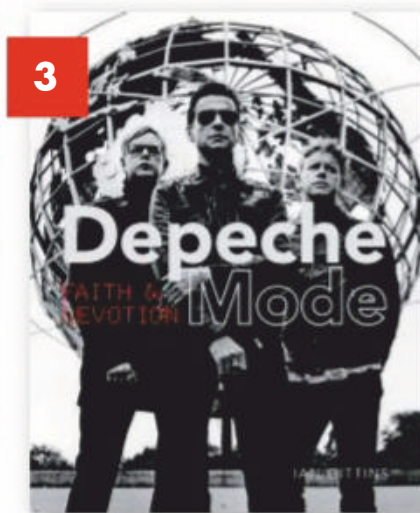
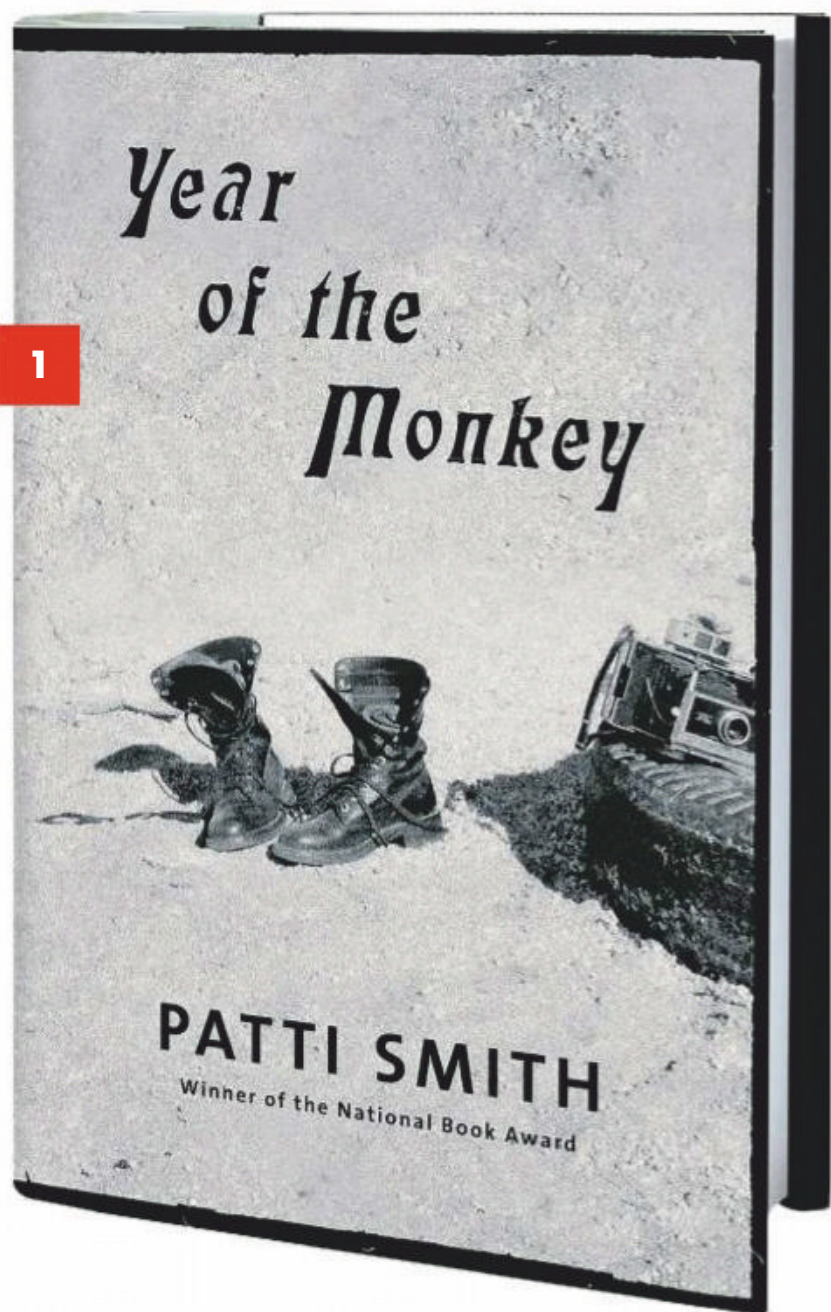
TOUCH AND GO, 1996

A more experimental prospect than Jonathan Fire\*Eater, the influential Dayton, Ohio trio tapped into the mid-'90s desire for cross-pollination and unhinged art-pop. ★★★★★

Fire\*Eater were never cute in that way: onstage, they looked and sounded like a tangle of live jump-leads, their songs were abrasive, theatrical, crazily idiosyncratic. In later bitterer life, Lupton said he tired of Martin's "screeching fucking doorbell organ" but it runs a thrillingly high voltage through *Make It Precious* or the gangrenous garage-rock of *The Cakewalk Of Crime*, not just a gothic Americana generator, but a shifting, suggestive layer that serves a similar purpose to John Cale's viola.

There were other bands on their twisted path – Ohio's Brainiac, for example, or Six Finger Satellite, connected to the future New York explosion by their soundman James Murphy – yet Jonathan Fire\*Eater had a fierce clarity elevated further by Lupton's lyrical gift. Songs are inhabited by odd characters: doomed red-lipped film stars,





## BOOKS

Victoria Segal picks the best music books of the month.

**I**n her 2015 memoir, *M Train*, Patti Smith revealed one of her greatest pleasures was checking in to her favourite London hotel to watch ITV3 dramas from the Morse-Midsomer school of police procedurals. It makes sense, then, that **1** *Year Of The Monkey* (BLOOMSBURY, ★★★★★) should unfold like a detective story – albeit one written by Paul Auster with its signs, symbols and soft border between reality and fantasy. Beginning on New Year's Day 2016, as Smith arrives at Santa Cruz's significantly named Dream Inn, it traces 12 months when Smith faces passing time, loss (not least the terminal illness of collaborator Sam Shepard) and the world “going nuts”. A beatnik Alice In Wonderland, measured out in black coffee and Polaroids, it's full of quiet puzzles, small epiphanies, more little clues how to live.

**2** *Hurricanes: A Memoir*, by Rick Ross (HANOVERSQUARE PRESS, ★★★), doesn't have quite the same meditative tone, but the rapper's autobiography comes with its own

illuminating flare. “I wanted to have a half a million dollar car and a three million dollar house and a pretty hoe in a bikini with me in the jacuzzi,” writes the ruggedly honest Ross. A collaboration with writer Neil Belkin-Martinez, his book unfolds like deleted scenes from a George Pelecanos novel, the former William Leonard Roberts II detailing his

progression from drug-dealing in Miami to working as a correctional officer to hip-hop stardom. High on drama, among other things.

There's no lack of excess in **3** *Depeche Mode: Faith & Devotion*, by Ian Gittins (PALAZZO, ★★★), either: singer Dave Gahan burned through so many lives that LA paramedics nicknamed

him “The Cat”. As this crisp, comprehensive account of their career shows, though, their late-'80s and early-'90s pomp was miles from the band's callow Basildon beginnings – “dodgy suits”, office jobs and Martin Gore's devout girlfriend who thought seeing someone naked on TV was “perverted”. But when it came to the wages of sin, Depeche Mode's earning power was immense. **Q**

**Rick Ross's autobiography is high on drama, among other things.**

## GADGETS

Niall Doherty's gizmos round-up.



### ROBERTS STREAM 941 £199.99

Some of Roberts's most popular radio designs are perfect for fitting into the background of a living room in *Midsomer Murders* – nice and twee and harmless, while John Nettles tries to get to the bottom of a chemical poisoning. This one is an excellent upgrade that also acts as a Bluetooth speaker, with DAB and internet radio. Buckle up, Nettles, the future is here (and it was definitely the shady vet). ★★★★★



### WHARFEDALE EXSON-M £69

Yes, this portable Bluetooth speaker has a name that sounds like a riverside apartment block where your annoying cousin lived in the '90s because “it was only, like, 10 minutes' walk from Pimlico, yah?” but it's actually a rugged, waterproof speaker for outdoorsy types. The sound is good, and it can charge your phone. Because when you get to the top of Everest, that will be your main concern. ★★★★★



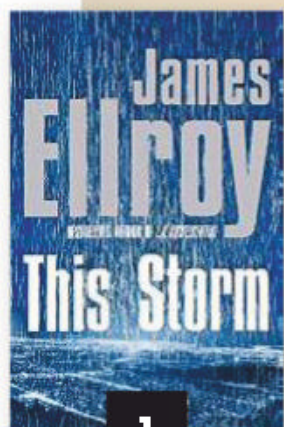
### REVONEXT NEX 202 £55.99

The RevoNext NEX 202 doesn't have a built-in mic, which is fine with me because I was looking for a pair of *headphones*. Who wants to be that person anyway, walking around, whispering into a wire like a bloke about to be lumped in the head by Jason Bourne? Not moi. These have a very acceptable price, a decent sound and an industrial look. But two out of three isn't bad. ★★★★★



# CHOICE CUTS

THE Q STAFF AND WRITERS' TIPS OF THE MONTH.



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2



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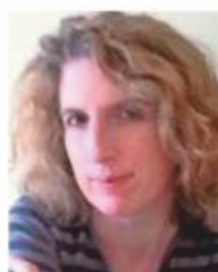
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## ANDY PERRY Q WRITER

"I'm currently neck-deep in **1 THIS STORM**, the second instalment in James Ellroy's dissection of LA crime circa Pearl Harbour. Forensic, relentless in his verbal punch,

and frequently disturbing, the 'Demon Dog' of American fiction only gets more enthralling. Like a dissolute Ellroy sleuth, I've been on the trail of a Serie A lead guitarist called **NEAL CASAL**. I was just starting to match his name with sky-scraping soloing, most recently on ace records by Chris Robinson Brotherhood and Gospelbeach, when I learnt of his passing in August, aged just 50. He was truly one of the rock greats, born 20 years too late."



## VICTORIA SEGAL Q WRITER

"Melancholia's inevitable autumn creep is well-served by **2 GIRL RAY**'s upcoming second album, *Girl*, the London trio pressing memories of summer

sort-of-loving between their sweet, shiny modern pop songs. Before You Begin, the debut from Atlanta's **SEQUOYAH MURRAY**, is great for anyone stockpiling FKA Twigs-style experimentation with added synth-pop for the long cold winter. Best preparation for acclimatising to sub-zero chill in a morally ruined landscape, however, remains the second series of **SUCCESSION**, Jesse Armstrong's reanimated Greek tragedy."



## NIALL DOHERTY DEPUTY EDITOR

"Being present at **3 SUPERGRASS**'s two comeback shows earlier this month in Pilton and London sent me on a deep dive into their first two albums and

B-sides, something I haven't done since, let's be honest, I was drunk about three Saturday nights ago. The singles are great, the songs that weren't singles sound like singles – it's excellent to have them back. I tempered the good vibes by watching Netflix documentary **THE GREAT HACK**, a film which goes on a deep dive of its own into the shady world of personal data. Very good documentary. But Supergrass were more fun."



## LAURA BARTON Q WRITER

"I feel particularly lit up at the moment by all the incredible music I've seen lately and that's about to be released: **4 THE MURDER CAPITAL** and **LISA O'NEILL** at End Of

The Road, **FOUR TET** at Green Man, the return of **HAPPYNESS** at Brixton Windmill, complete with new line-up and excellent new songs. And soon: **SPRINGSTEEN**'s directorial debut and an excellent new album from **VAN MORRISON**. Also **SOUNDS FROM A SAFE HARBOUR** in Cork, a festival at which music, art and dance cross-pollinate – work from Thom Yorke, Feist and Bryce Dessner mingling with that of Teac Damsa and Dorothy Cross."



## RACHEL AROESTI Q WRITER

"I've been bingeing on Joel Morris and Jason Hazeley's podcast **RULE OF THREE**, aka comedy nerd heaven – each episode sees the writers painstakingly dissect a sitcom,

sketch or stand-up routine chosen by their guest. If I had to pick my own subject, it might well be **5 STATH LETS FLATS**, Jamie Demetriou's superlative estate agency sitcom which recently concluded its second series on Channel 4. And like every other millennial woman in the Western world, I've been reconsidering the impact internet culture has on my self-image, thanks to Jia Tolentino's brilliant essay collection **TRICK MIRROR**."



## SIMON MCEWEN PRODUCTION EDITOR

"Can't think why, but my wife recently bought me **6 THE DESCENT OF MAN**, Grayson Perry's astute and amusing treatise on toxic masculinity. It's made me question ever

wearing blue jeans again. Equally enlightening is Stewart Lee's annotated collection of his Observer columns, **MARCH OF THE LEMMINGS: BREXIT IN PRINT & PERFORMANCE 2016-19**, a typically scabrous, hilarious examination of a country (and comedian) in the throes of falling apart. Some sort of equilibrium was restored by the blazing dub grooves of legendary Jamaican trombonist **VIN GORDON**'s excellent *African Shores* album."





**Highlights from Q partners**  
**Absolute Radio** this month include  
 a visit to Abbey Road Studios and  
 a Sam Fender co-host.



**He doesn't usually suck: Sam Fender discusses his fine new LP on Absolute.**

## LIAM GALLAGHER INTERVIEW

*Listen again on the Absolute app*  
 The Oasis frontman joined Absolute Radio's Dave Berry to co-host an hour-long show in which he chose tracks from his contemporaries – Happy Mondays, The Stone Roses and The Verve – and discussed his second solo LP, *Why Me? Why Not*. The whole show is available to listen again now on the free Absolute Radio smartphone app, where you can also access all of Absolute's "decade" stations.

## KEANE IN CONCERT

*Absolute Radio,*  
 26 September, 7pm  
 After going on an extended hiatus

in 2013, there's been a lot of love this year for the return of Keane, a band whose debut album was the one of the best-selling records of its era in the UK. To mark the opening of the new Hard Rock Cafe in Piccadilly Circus, they played an intimate, special gig for Absolute Radio prize-winners. You can hear highlights, along with a new interview, on Live Music Thursday with Danielle Perry.

## INSIDE ABBEY ROAD

*Absolute Radio,*  
 26 September, 9pm  
 The legendary building, originally called EMI Recording Studios, was re-named in 1970 after The Beatles' penultimate album made

it famous. The recording sessions for Abbey Road were the last that all four Beatles played on together. In this one-off programme, broadcast exactly 50 years since that release, Absolute Radio meets the producers and the staff who walk through its hallowed doors every day – plus musicians who've dreamt of working there, such as contributor Nile Rodgers.

## SAM FENDER CO-HOST

*Absolute Radio,* 6 October, 8pm  
 The debut album by the young singer-songwriter from North Shields is one of the year's most anticipated releases, full of hard-hitting and deeply personal songs. For this specially recorded

co-host with Absolute Radio's Pete Donaldson, Sam discusses tracks from the record, *Hypersonic Missiles*, as well as picking music by other artists who have influenced him.

## THE DEVIL'S MUSIC

*Absolute Radio,* 13 October, 8pm  
 While no history of 20th-century rock music would be complete without reference to The Beatles, the Stones and Led Zeppelin, this new documentary, hosted by Claire Sturgess, looks at the great blues artists who inspired them. *The Devil's Music* traces some of their stories and pays respect to the roots of this great American artform.



**This month, Sunday Night Music Club host Danielle Perry raves about The Big Easy...**



I'm writing this from the French Quarter in New Orleans, one of the world's most culturally significant cities. Its history and legacy are enchanting and fascinating, while its ongoing survival, especially since the catastrophic fallout from Hurricane Katrina

in 2005, is equally inspiring. I visited historic jazz haunt Preservation Hall last night and it was just all-round perfection. I first saw the venue's house band a few years back when they supported Arcade Fire (Win Butler and Régine Chassange moved to New Orleans a couple of

years ago) and their performance yesterday was similarly memorable.

One thing that is truly magical about this city is just how much music surrounds you. The heartbeat of New Orleans is its rawness, passion and carnival, with seemingly great music festivals

on every corner. It's something that we could learn from in the UK, starting from the ground up. I've banged on about the closure of our grass roots venues for a while now, but let's keep banging that beautiful drum.

■ *The Sunday Night Music Club* starts at 8pm.





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## December

5 **Newcastle** - O<sub>2</sub> Academy\*    13 **London** - O<sub>2</sub> Shepherds Bush Empire

6 **Glasgow** - O<sub>2</sub> Academy    14 **Norwich** - UEA\*

7 **Hull** - The Welly\*    19 **Exeter** - Lemon Grove\*

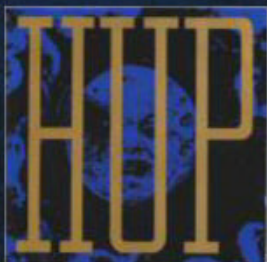
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Thu 12 December ★ **Glasgow** O<sub>2</sub> Academy

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FRI 15 NOV **BIRMINGHAM** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 16 NOV **LEICESTER** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

FRI 22 NOV **NEWCASTLE** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 23 NOV **GLASGOW** GARAGE

SAT 30 NOV **LIVERPOOL** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

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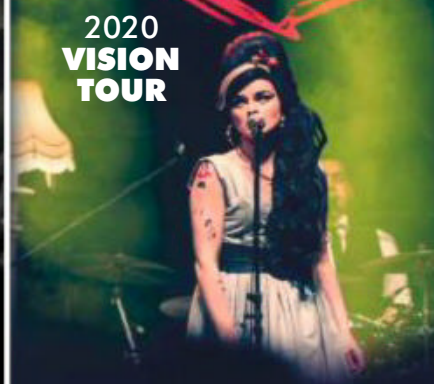
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FRI 1st MAY  
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O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

FRI 8th MAY  
**BIRMINGHAM**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY3

FRI 15th MAY  
**LONDON**  
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ISLINGTON

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**LEICESTER** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

TUE 26 NOV  
**BIRMINGHAM** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

WED 27 NOV  
**OXFORD** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

THU 28 NOV  
**BRISTOL** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

SAT 30 NOV  
**LONDON**  
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plus their biggest hits & best  
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# Definitely Maybe

OCTOBER  
SAT 05 **LIVERPOOL** O<sub>2</sub> Academy2

SAT 12 **BIRMINGHAM** O<sub>2</sub> Academy2

NOVEMBER  
SAT 16 **LONDON**  
O<sub>2</sub> Academy2 Islington

SAT 23 **LEICESTER** O<sub>2</sub> Academy2

FRI 29 **BOURNEMOUTH** O<sub>2</sub> Academy

SAT 30 **OXFORD** O<sub>2</sub> Academy2

DECEMBER  
SAT 14 **SHEFFIELD** O<sub>2</sub> Academy2

FRI 20 **NEWCASTLE** O<sub>2</sub> Academy

SUN 22 **MANCHESTER** O<sub>2</sub> RITZ

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★★★★★  
METAL HAMSTER  
★★★★★  
ROCK SOUND  
★★★★★  
SOME GUY

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SAT 19 OCT **LEEDS** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

SAT 09 NOV **BRISTOL** O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

FRI 06 DEC **BIRMINGHAM** O<sub>2</sub> INSTITUTE

FRI 13 DEC **LONDON** O<sub>2</sub> FORUM KENTISH TOWN

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# THE CLONE ROSES

VERSUS  
**KAZABIAN**

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**BIRMINGHAM**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

SAT 14th DECEMBER  
**LEICESTER**  
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O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 19 OCT  
**BIRMINGHAM**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY3

SAT 26 OCT  
**LEICESTER**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

FRI 08 NOV  
**NEWCASTLE**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 09 NOV  
**LIVERPOOL**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 23 NOV  
**LONDON**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

SAT 07 DEC  
**SHEFFIELD**  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

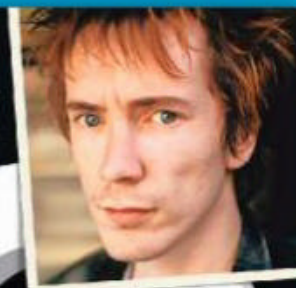


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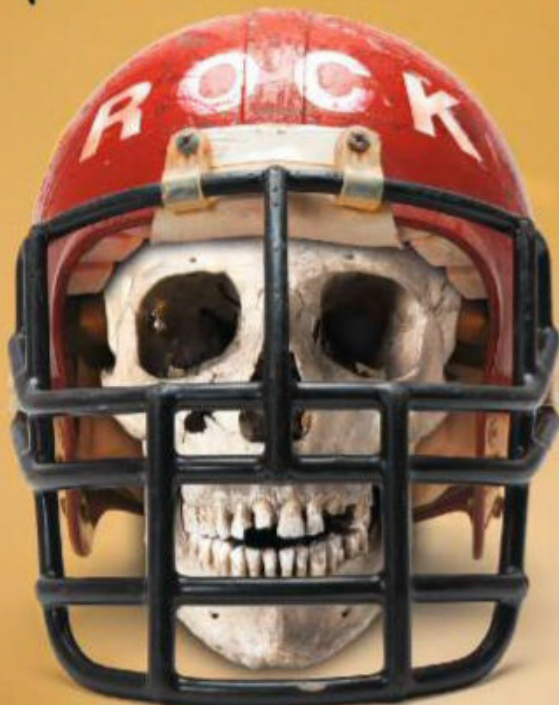
**"DO YOU  
CARE IF ROCK  
IS DEAD? I DON'T!"**

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**145  
REVIEWS**  
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AND MORE

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CLARK**  
A BYRD LIKE  
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# QMail

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## Letter Of The Month

### Oasis: What's The Story?

Dear Q, I very much enjoyed your exhaustive feature on the 25th anniversary of Definitely Maybe, which brought back many memories of avidly following Oasis around the UK as they took the music world by storm. I fondly recall having to escort Liam to the gents when I worked at Brighton Centre on their big headline show that December, having found him lost, wandering

the corridors while the rest of the band soundchecked. What a triumphant gig that was! However, I did spot one inaccuracy in your article – my prized promo copy of the album has a sticker on it saying it actually came out on 30 August, 1994 as in those pre-internet days all the record stores would have been closed on the Bank Holiday Monday. Great issue, all the best!

*Phil Newton, via Q Mail*



**Q402: reminded Phil of “escorting Liam to the gents.”**

## Definitely Article

Dear Q, Thank you for your excellent Definitely Maybe feature in the latest issue of Q. It made me relive the excitement I felt first hearing the album 25 years ago. Now, Noel probably would want to relieve me of my teeth for this, but I must say I always felt he was wrong to sack original drummer Tony McCarroll for being “not very good”. To me, Oasis lost something essential when Tony stopped setting the pace. Agreed, technically he might not be the best drummer in the world. But then Oasis’s appeal never was about technical ability. In 1994 Oasis gave my 20-year-old self some much needed self-belief. They convinced me that you

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### This month's teaser: Where was Mike Skinner of The Streets born?

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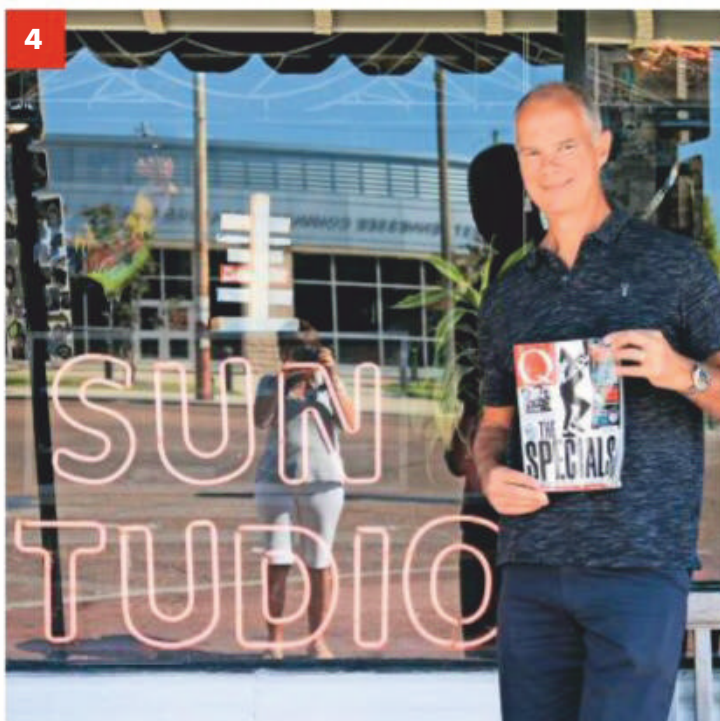
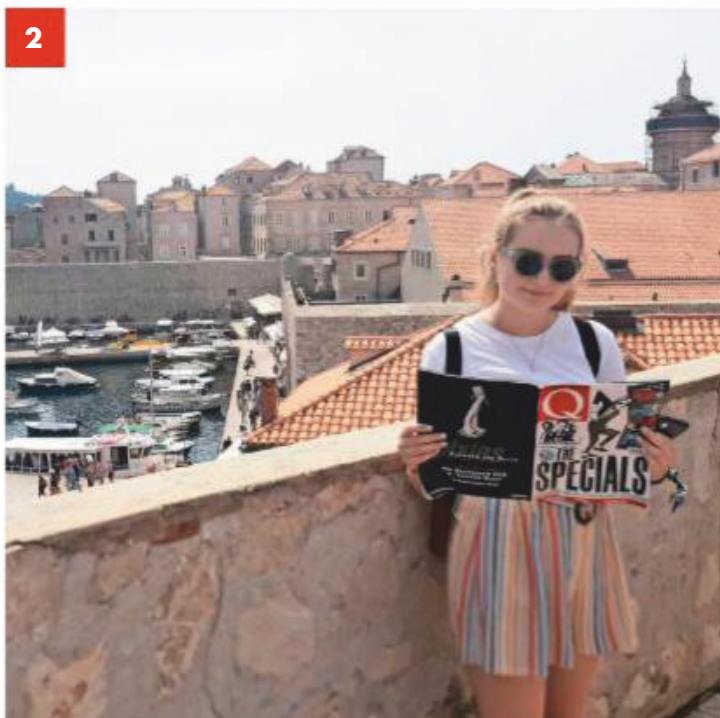
your address, to [captioncomp@Qthemusic.com](mailto:captioncomp@Qthemusic.com) or on a postcard to the above address. See below for terms and conditions. Competition closes: **14 October 2019.**

### Q402 Winners:

Congratulations to Caroline Donatantonio, Brookmans Park, and Emma Penn, Penarth, who each win a pair of VIP tickets to South West Four Festival.

Ts&Cs: To win, email your answer to: [captioncomp@Qthemusic.com](mailto:captioncomp@Qthemusic.com) or post to the usual Q address before 14/10/19. One winner will be chosen by the panel. The winner will be notified, by email, 7-10 days after the closing date and must respond to Q within 14 days or another winner may be chosen. Q will not respond to questions about its chosen winners but will provide winners' names and the home towns, provided a request is made to the usual Q address and accompanied with a SAE. One entry per person and you must be over 18 and live in the UK. Prize is non-negotiable with no cash alternative. Personal data will be collected by Q and passed to prize provider to process entries. See <http://www.bauerdatapromise.co.uk> for more details. Full Ts&Cs apply, see [www.bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html](http://www.bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html). Any queries, email: [QMail@Qthemusic.com](mailto:QMail@Qthemusic.com)





# The World of

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4. Rob Hughes, Sun Studio, Memphis

don't have to be the best at what you do in order to succeed and that what only really matters is to have true conviction. The most convincing proof of that to me has always been Tony's very effective, direct drumming style. A vital element of what set Oasis apart and what made them so unique, and what drove many of their early songs on and made them such a powerful force.

*Cees Pulles, Vught, The Netherlands*

Dear Q, I thoroughly enjoyed your piece on what in my opinion is Oasis's magnum opus – Definitely Maybe. For a kid who grew up in what I think was the greatest of decades, the '90s, it produced an abundance of memory and nostalgia. It's quite sad at the moment that fans appear to be in either team Noel or camp Liam. I for one sit in neither; I think I am one of the few who are glad that Oasis are still split and pursuing solo projects. Don't get me wrong,

if a reunion ever happened, I'd be first in line for tickets with a long parka and haircut I couldn't get away with at this age. I can't help but enjoy the new direction Noel has gone in with the experimental evolution and sound. I also enjoy Liam's retro indie vibe, a throwback to Oasis's style that will have the loyal fans lapping it up. Again, it is a shame that a minority of folk decide to have their say on the current Gallagher feud. Social media is cluttered with disrespectful remarks about one or the other, how bad their music is, how much the other acts like a twat etc. Music is subjective and not to everyone's taste, this is a fact. If someone doesn't like the current path one artist is heading down, why not do the simple thing – stop listening. Yours faithfully,

*Ethan Maiden, South Yorkshire*

Dear Q, I've no wish to intervene in the unseemly squabble between the Gallaghers, but I do

think Noel is starting to come across as exceedingly pretentious. On the one hand he claims that Oasis were inclusive, and in the next he's calling Liam's music "unsophisticated... for unsophisticated people". Let's face it, High Flying Birds aren't all that earth-shattering, are they?

*Rob Trent, Southampton*

## Q403 Spine Message

Dear Q, For the first time ever I've managed to work it out. "Cecil" (Bustamente Campbell) is the real name of Prince Buster who was a huge influence on many ska artists including your cover stars The Specials. I hope this is right and gets published.

*Simon Moss, via Q Mail*

**You are right, Simon. Give yourself a pat on the back.**



**All mod cons: The Prisoners.**

## Doing Time

Dear Ted Kessler, just read your editorial in Q403 and felt compelled to contact you. Seems we may well have been hanging around the same gigs and venues in our mid to late teens. Like you,

I followed The Prisoners for a few years, seeing them regularly at The Clarendon, The Cricketers, 100 Club, Hope & Anchor etc. I also went to see bands like Thee Mighty Caesars, The Daggersmen, The Milkshakes and my absolute favourites Small World. The reason I wanted to contact you is last year I got told I had tinnitus and the specialist asked me if I'd been exposed to loud music when I was younger. I could only smile as The Clarendon immediately sprang to mind, so at least the cause was worthwhile. Cheers.

*Bill Drury, via email*



## Last Word

**“It’s important to not be a wasp on the ceiling the whole time, constantly at it.”**

**Richard Hawley**

The singer-songwriter on the importance of spending the odd day in bed and why he’d never be a full-time actor.

W

**When did you last get angry with a stranger?**

I’m not someone who

is given to aggressive displays. It’s been known, like most people, but I try and make things as polite as possible. I’ve found over the years that if you just maintain a certain level of calm, you can negotiate your way out of most situations. Either that, or get good at fucking running!

**What was the last thing you bought that you wish you hadn’t?**

I’m a fucker for buying stuff off eBay. I buy records and clothes, and you get them and they’re scratched or they don’t fit. I’m a massive record collector of vintage stuff and most of the time it’s good, but occasionally you’ll buy something and it’s like, “This is fucked.”

**When was the last time you received some good advice?**

It was a mate of mine, Danny Thompson, the great double bass player. We were hanging out together, doing a charity concert. Danny, in the middle of a conversation, said, “Now you’re doing well, Rich, I’ve got a piece of advice for you.” Danny’s been involved in music since the ’50s and played on some of the most seminal records ever made, so I’m thinking, “I better sit down as this advice might be quite lengthy.” So I’m sat there

**To the lighthouse: Richard Hawley, a beacon of sanity.**

waiting for these pearls of wisdom to descend, and he just said to me, “Don’t be a c\*\*t.”

**When did you last wear fancy dress?**

There’s two times, actually. Nick Banks, the drummer from Pulp, had a fancy dress party last year and us lot turned up as the cast of Star Trek. I tried to be Spock. There was another occasion when I was playing with Jarvis Cocker in his band Relaxed Muscle. We did a Halloween thing and I was Death. I had this one-piece black cowl that went over your entire body. Once it was on, you couldn’t see fuck-all. Jarv had to help me onstage. That was quite amusing.

**When were you last offered an acting role?**

Last week, funnily enough. I get offered bit parts in things, which I quite enjoy the thought of – being an ice-cream man or something like that. But I’d never jump ship and all of a

sudden become an actor.

Generally speaking, musicians who act are fucking awful.

**When did you last spend the whole day in bed?**

Yesterday. I sometimes find myself drifting off in my mind, just thinking about things, a song, something, whatever it might be. Time just flies by. It’s important to not be a wasp on the ceiling the whole time, constantly at it. To have a day just completely relaxed, not particularly achieving that much, I get a lot of pleasure from that. Probably because I’m a lazy c\*\*t. I’ll strum the odd chord in bed, just to justify it enough.

**What’s the last album you listened to all the way through in one sitting?**

I managed to find The Everly Brothers’ *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us*, which was an album my mum and dad listened to over and over again and I’d not heard it for some years. The

copy I’ve got is dad’s old copy, which is fucked, and I did buy a good condition one on eBay and I sat and listened to that all the way through.


**When did you last get fall-over drunk?**

Well, that kind of reflects as to why I spent all day yesterday in bed. What was I doing the night before? I can’t remember.

**When were you last star-struck?**

I’ve been fortunate enough to work with some pretty amazing people. I guess when I first met Scott Walker was something where I was literally tongue-tied like a gibbering idiot, just didn’t know what to say. Then we became friends. I’ve had that with Duane Eddy as well at first.

**What’s the last thing you’d do before the apocalypse?**

I would dance with my wife. I’m a terrible dancer, so it would be a time to put on The Stooges and dance your fucking head off. 



REVEALED NEXT MONTH...

50

# SONGS OF THE DECADE

ONLY IN THE  
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